TAMIL CULTURE

Vol. III - 1954

தனிநாயகம் அடிகளார்



உலகத் தமிழாராய்ச்சி நிறுவனம்

International Institute of Tamil Studies



"அறிவுச் செல்வங்கள் அனைத்தையும்
தமிழுக்குக் கொண்டுவர வேண்டும்.
இனிவரும் நூற்றாண்டுகளுக்கும்
அருந்தமிழை ஆற்றல் படுத்த வேண்டும்"

- மாண்புமிகு தமிழ்நாடு முதலமைச்சர்
புரட்சித் தலைவி
அம்மா அவர்கள்

TAMIL CULTURE

Vol. III - 1954

ஆசிரியர் :

தனிநாயகம் அடிகளார்



உலகத் தமிழாராய்ச்சி நிறுவனம்

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF TAMIL STUDIES

இரண்டாம் முதன்மைச் சாலை, மையத் தொழில்நுட்பப் பயிலக வளாகம்

தரமணி, சென்னை - 600 113

நூல் விவரக் குறிப்பு

நூல் தலைப்பு : TAMIL CULTURE Vol. III - 1954

பதிப்பாசிரியர் : தனிநாயகம் அடிகளார்

வெளியீட்டாளரும் பதிப்புரிமையும் : உலகத் தமிழாராய்ச்சி நிறுவனம்
இரண்டாம் முதன்மை சாலை
மையத்தொழில்நுட்பப் பயிலக வளாகம்
தரமணி, சென்னை - 600 113.

தொலைபேசி எண் : 044 22542992

மொழி : ஆங்கிலம், தமிழ்

பதிப்பு ஆண்டு : 2014 : முதற்பதிப்பு :

பயன்படுத்திய தாள் : 16 கிகி டி.என்.பி.எல்.வெள்ளை

நூலின் அளவு : 1/8 டெம்மி

எழுத்தின் அளவு : 11 புள்ளி

பக்க எண்ணிக்கை : 400

அச்சுப்படிகளின் எண்ணிக்கை : 1200

விலை : ரூ.250 (ரூபாய் இருநூற்றி ஐம்பது மட்டும்)
: $10 USD

ISBN : 978-93-85165-03-0

பொருண்மை : முத்திங்கள் இதழ்

அச்சகம் : ராஜ் எண்டர்பிரைஸஸ்
திருவல்லிக்கேணி
சென்னை - 600 005.

முனைவர் **கோ.விசயராகவன்** எம்.ஏ., எம்.ஃபில்.,எம்.பி.ஏ.,பி.எட்., பிஎச்.டி.
இயக்குநர்
உலகத் தமிழாராய்ச்சி நிறுவனம்
சென்னை 600 113

அணிந்துரை

காலத்தால் உருவாகியும் வளர்ந்தும் முதிர்ந்தும் மொழிகளுக்கெல்லாம் மூத்த மொழியாக இருப்பது தமிழ்மொழி, எனினும் அதன் இளமையையும் எளிமையையும் தெளிவையும், இனிமையையும் உலகறியச் செய்ய முனைப்புடன் செயல்பட்ட அறிஞர் பெருமக்கள் பலர். அவர்களுள் "திறமான புலமையெனில் வெளிநாட்டார் அதை வணக்கம் செய்தல் வேண்டும்" என்ற மகாகவியின் மந்திர மொழிக்கேற்பத் தமிழ்மொழியின் பெருமையை உலகமெலாம் பரவச் செய்த பெருமக்களுள் தவத்திரு **தனிநாயக அடிகளாரும்** ஒருவர். அவர் உலக நாடுகளுக்கெல்லாம் தாமே தூதாகச் சென்று தமிழின் பெருமையை, தமிழனின் அருமையை, தமிழ்நாட்டின் தனித்தன்மையை எடுத்துக் கூறித் தமிழின் உயர்மொழிப் பண்பை உலகறியச் செய்தவர். உலகத்தமிழ் ஆராய்ச்சி நிறுவனம் தோன்றக் காரணமானவர்.

உலகத் தமிழாராய்ச்சி மாநாடுகள் காணச் செய்தவர். ஈழத்தில் 02.08.1913இல் நாகநாத கணபதி பிள்ளைக்கும் (ஹென்றி ஸ்தனிஸ்லாஸ்) சிசில் இராசம்மா வஸ்தியா பிள்ளைக்கும் திருமகனாகத் தோன்றியவர். உலகெங்கும் சென்று உயர்தமிழுக்கு உரிய பெருமை கிடைக்கப் பாடுபட்டவர்.

தவத்திரு தனிநாயக அடிகளார் உலக நாடுகளுக்குச் சென்று தமிழ்மொழியின், தமிழ் இனத்தின் பெருமையை

உலகறியச் செய்தபோது ஆய்வாளர்களும் தமிழ் ஆர்வலர்களும் தமிழ் ஆராய்ச்சி இதழொன்று ஆங்கிலத்தில் வெளியிட வேண்டும் என்ற கருத்தினை அவரிடம் தெரிவித்தார்கள்.

அதன் பயனாக உலக நாடுகளில் பணியாற்றிவரும் தமிழறிஞர்களை ஒருங்கிணைத்துத் தமிழாராய்ச்சியை ஒருமுகப்படுத்தவும், வளப்படுத்தவும் 1952இல் Tamil Culture என்னும் முத்திங்கள் இதழை அடிகளார் தொடங்கினார். அவ் இதழில் தமிழ்ப்பண்பாடு, தமிழர் கல்விநிலை, தமிழர்களின் சிந்தனைச் செழுமை பற்றிய கட்டுரைகளைச் சமகால மேலைநாட்டு இலக்கியத் திறனாய்வுக் கோட்பாடுகளுக்கேற்ப அடிகளார் எழுதினார். மேலும் பல மேநாட்டறிஞர்களின் கட்டுரைகளையும் இடம்பெறச் செய்தார். அவருடைய நூற்றாண்டு விழா, **மாண்புமிகு முதலமைச்சர் புரட்சித் தலைவி அம்மா** அவர்களின் மேலான ஆணைப்படி தமிழ்நாடு அரசின் சார்பில் உலகத் தமிழாராய்ச்சி நிறுவனத்தில் சிறப்பாக நடத்தப்பட்டது. அவர் தொடர்புடைய நூல்கள் வெளியிடப்பட்டு அவரது தமிழ்ப்பணி போற்றப்பட்டது.

தவத்திரு தனிநாயக அடிகளாரை ஆசிரியராகக் கொண்டு 1952 ஆம் ஆண்டு முதல் முத்திங்களிதழாக Tamil Culture என்னும் இதழ் வெளிவந்தது. இவ்விதழின் தொகுப்புகள் இன்று உங்கள் கரங்களில் தவழ்கின்றன.

இவ்விதழ்கள் தமிழ்த் தொண்டு பரவுசீர்க் கருத்துக் கருவூலங்கள்; காலங் காலமாக நாடெங்கும் ஒளிவீசக் கூடியவைகள்; அருகிவரும் தமிழாய்வுக் களங்களுக்கு கலங்கரை விளக்கொளிகள்; அரிதின் முயன்று அன்னைத் தமிழ் வளர்த்த தவத்திரு தனிநாயக அடிகளாரின் Tamil Culture முத்திங்கள் இதழ்களை ஆண்டுவாரியாக ஒன்றுதிரட்டித் தொகுப்பு நூல்களாக வெளியிடப்படுகின்றன.

தமிழறிஞர்களின் தமிழ்த் தொண்டினை எப்போதும் பாராட்டுவதில் முதன்மையானவர் **மாண்புமிகு தமிழ்நாடு முதலமைச்சர் புரட்சித் தலைவி அம்மா** அவர்கள் ஆவார். மாண்புமிகு அம்மா அவர்கள் தமிழ் மீதும் தமிழர் மீதும் தமிழ்நாட்டின் மீதும் தமிழ்ப் பண்பாட்டின் மீதும்

கொண்டுள்ள அன்பும் கருணையும் அளப்பரியன. ஆதலால், இவற்றின் மேம்பாட்டுக்கெனப் பல திட்டங்களை மேற்கொண்டு வருகின்றார்கள். ஒல்லும் வகையெல்லாம் தமிழ் வளர்த்து வரும் **மாண்புமிகு தமிழ்நாடு முதலமைச்சர் புரட்சித்தலைவி அம்மா** அவர்களுக்கு உலகத் தமிழாராய்ச்சி நிறுவனத்தின் சார்பில் நன்றிகளைப் பதிவு செய்கின்றேன்.

தமிழ் மொழி வளர்ச்சிக்கு ஆக்கமும் ஊக்கமும் அளித்துவரும் மாண்புமிகு தமிழ் ஆட்சிமொழி, தமிழ்ப் பண்பாட்டுத் துறை, தொல்லியல் துறை (ம) பள்ளிக் கல்வித் துறை அமைச்சர் கே. சி. வீரமணி அவர்களுக்கும் நன்றி.

தமிழ் வளர்ச்சிப் பணிகளில் ஆர்வத்தோடு நாட்டம் செலுத்தித் தமிழ்த் தொண்டாற்றிவரும் தமிழ்வளர்ச்சி மற்றும் செய்தித்துறைச் செயலாளர் முனைவர் மூ.இராசாராம் இ.ஆ.ப. அவர்களுக்கும் இதயம் கனிந்த நன்றியினைத் தெரிவித்துக் கொள்கிறேன்.

இந்நூல் சிறப்பான முறையில் மறு அச்சுப் பெற முனைந்து உழைத்த உலகத் தமிழாராய்ச்சி நிறுவன அனைத்துப் பணியாளர்களுக்கும் அச்சகத்தார்க்கும் என் நன்றி.

இயக்குநர்

VOL. III No. 1 JANUARY, 1954

TAMIL CULTURE

A Quarterly Review dedicated to the study of Tamiliana

 Rs. 5 yearly

Readers' Forum

VATICAN CITY MAIL

I read with very great interest and profit the September issue (Vol. II. Nos. 3-4) of "*Tamil Culture.*" It may interest you to know when my elder brother, the late N. M. Roche-Victoria, and I were students at St. Benedict's College, Colombo, we travelled with Sir Ponnambala Arunachalam and family from Colombo to Tuticorin — about the year 1892. I was then thirteen years old. Though it is now more than sixty years, the impression made on me by that perfect gentleman has never been effaced. If I remember right, he told me that he was going as a pilgrim to visit the Hindu shrines in South India.

Inscrutable are the ways of God. When you asked permission three years ago to start a paper in English I never thought, for that matter you never suspected, that eventually it would be "*Tamil Culture,*" unique of its kind in India or Ceylon. You may rejoice and thank God "*Tamil Culture*" has come to stay. The contributors to your learned periodical are not insular in their outlook. They cater to every kind of taste. God bless them.

The gentleman who has sent you a cheque for Rs. 100/- as annual gift subscription for twenty persons deserves hearty congratulations. Let us hope some more gentlemen will take the cue from this anonymous benefactor.

Ever yours

✠ Tiburtius

5, Borgo Santo Spirito,
November 9, 1953.

Francis Tiburtius Roche S.J.
(*First Bishop of Tuticorin*)
Founder - Patron of 'Tamil Culture'

PRAGUE MAIL

In Tamil Culture, Vol. I. No. 2 Mr. C. R. Myleru has published an interesting article on some Dravidian loan-words in English. I should like to add a few notes here about four Dravidan loans in Czech. If it is true that the word tukiyyim in I Kings X, 72,

and II. Chronicles IX. 21 is derived from Dravidian / Tamil தோகை Malayalam Tōka / "tail of a peacock," "peacock"*, then the Czech Páv "Peafowl" is orignally Dravidian :

Greek tavōs > taōs > Lat. Pávō > Czech Páv "peafowl"
Páv "peafowl" is originally Dravidian :

Tam. அரிசி > Greek óryza > Lat. oryza (> It. riso; > Fr. riz) > Czech. ryze "rice";

Tm. பிப்பிலி > Greek péperi > Lat. piper > Sl.* Pbpbrb > Old Czech pper > Czech pepr "pepper";

Tam. இஞ்சிவேர் > Greek ziggiberos / pron. zingiberos / > Lat. zingiber > It. zenzovero > Czech zázvor "ginger" / cf. Russian imbir and German Ingwer/.

Besides these words which are now used like native Czech words quite organically and commonly, there exist a number of words, taken directly or indirectly into Czech in times quite recent,

e.g. kuli < Tam. கூலி, betel < Tam. வெற்றிலை, korund < Tam. குருந்தம்.

Thus we see that also the Czech word-treasure, indirectly of course, through Greek and Latin, has been enriched by Dravidian.

KAMIL ZVELEBIL

Dept. of Dravidology,
Oriental Institute,
Prague, Czechoslovakia.

WASHINGTON MAIL

Gentlemen :

"Tamil Culture" is needed for the collections of the Library of Congress. Would it be possible for you to present a copy to the Library? The enclosed mailing label, with your name as donor indicated on the package, will bring it to us through the mail.

If the publication is not available, we should appreciate a reply to that effect. We shall be most grateful for such cooperation as you can give.

Sincerely yours,
(*Sd.*) FRANCES F. PAGE
for Alton H. Keller
Chief, Exchange and Gift Division,

The Library of Congress,
Washington 25, D. C.
December 8, 1953.

NEW YORK MAIL

The New York Public Library is one of the world's great reference libraries. To maintain and develop its collections, it is dependent upon the generosity of authors, publishers, institutions and individual donors in all parts of the world. Your help in supporting our collections will be greatly appreciated.

Subject: Tamil Culture: Quarterly Review Dedicated to the study of Tamiliana.

Will it be possible for you to present a copy of the above publication to our Library?

J. W. HENDERSON,
Chief of Acquisition Division.

The New York Public Library,
Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations,
Acquisition Division,
Fifth Ave. & 42nd Street,
New York 18, N. Y.

ROME MAIL

Centro Di Diffusione Culturale
Data del timbro postale

Egregio Signore,

la mia attenzione è stata attirata dal nome del Suo periodico e sono disposto a far conoscerne meglio l'attività in Italia, rivolgendomi sia agli ambienti universitari e intellettuali, sia a quelli ancor più vasti delle categorie professionali e dell'opinione pubblica, mercè pure i giornali ai quali collaboro.

Ciò premesso, Le propongo di spedirmi regolarmente il sommario di ogni numero della Sua pubblicazione oppure, se lo ritiene più utile, il periodico stesso per mia documentazione. In questo modo potrei soddisfare subito eventuali richieste di dettagli sui varî articoli, e di abbonamenti.

Spero che la mia iniziativa sarà accolta con favore, tanto più che è conosciuta e apprezzata dal Centro Internazionale per la Comparazione a Sintesi (ROMA, Chiostro dei Genevesi - 12, via Anicia), il quale riunisce personalita appartenenti alla più elevata cultura italiana.

Voglia gradire i miei più distinti saluti.

L. E. CHECCHI

Roma,
22, Via Cardinale De Luca,
Telef: 360. 465.

PARIS MAIL

Monsieur,

J'ai bien reçu votre aimable lettre et les numèros de *Tamil Culture* qu'elle m'annoncait. Je vous en remercie très vivement. Votre revue m'intèresse beaucoup et, puisque vous vouley bien me faire l'honneur de me demander un article pour elle, je serai herereux de vous en envoyer un dès que ce sera possible.

JEAN FILLIOZAT

Collège De France,
Paris.
Chaire,
De Langues et Littèratures De L'inde.

SINGAPORE MAIL

வெல்க தமிழ்

சிங்கப்பூர்
௧௯௮௪ புரட்டாசி ௨௰
6-10-53

தி. கோபாலகிருட்டிணன்,
சா. க. மேற்பார்வை
49, மார்க்கெட்டு ஸ்திரீட்டு,
சிங்கப்பூர் — 1.

"நுங்கள் மாட்டு யான் விடுக்கும் பிறிதொரு வேண்டுகோள் ஒன்றும் உளது. அதனைச் சற்றே செவி மடுப்பீர். தமிழ்ப் பண்பு (**Tamil Culture**) என்ற பெயராலே தாங்கள் காலாண்டு இதழ் ஒன்று நடாத்தி வருகின்றீர்கள். இற்றை நாள் வரை யாரும் ஆராய்ச்சி நடத்தாத பகுதிகளாய தமிழர் நாகரிகமும், திராவிட மொழியினமும், திராவிடக் கலைகளும் அவ்வாங்கில் இதழிலே முதலிடம் பெற்றுத் திகழுதல் கண்டு கரையிலாக் களிப் பெய்தும் பல்லோருள் யானும் ஒருவன். ஆயினும் அவ்விதழிலே வரும் கருத்துக்களனைத்தையும் ஆங்கிலமறியாத தமிழனும் கற்றுத் தெளிதல் வேண்டும். ஆதலின் இவ்விதழின் தமிழ்ப் பதிப்பும் ஆங்கிலப் பதிப்புடன் வெளியிடுவிராயின் முன்னைத் தமிழர் நாகரிகத்தையும் இமயத்தின் எல்லைகண்ட எந்தமிழன் மாண்பினையும் பண்டைத் தமிழகத்தின் மிகுந்த வளத்தையும் செழித்த வாணிபத்தையும் இற்றைத் தமிழர்க்கு எடுத்துக் காட்டல் எளிதாகுமன்றோ? இஃது ஆங்கிலத்தில் மட்டும் அச்சிடப்பெறின் ஆங்கிலம் பயின்றார்க்கேயன்றி ஏனையோர்க்குப் புலனாகாதன்றோ? அதுபற்றியேதான் யானும் எந்தமிழிலேயும் இவ்வரிய இதழினை வெளியிடுங்கள் என நுங்களை மன்றாடிக் கேட்கின்றேன்.

தி. கோபாலகிருட்டிணன்,
சிங்கப்பூர்.

COLOMBO MAIL

CLASSICAL TAMIL — A SUBJECT FOR STUDY IN SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES AND FOR PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS

Sir,

In your last issue, on page 220. Mr. V. K. Sivapragasam, in his concluding paragraph, observes as follows:—

> "The University of London has not approved Tamil as a Classical Language for purposes of examination. It is unfortunate that the scholars and well-wishers of Tamil do not take interest in this important problem."

2. The matter was taken up by me in 1936 with the Director of Education, The Ceylon University Council, The London University and the Civil Service Commission, London, whose replies are appended for the information of your readers. The Ceylon University or the London University has not yet given classical Tamil an equal place with such classical languages such as Latin, Sanscrit, Pali, Hebrew etc. It is the grouping up of subjects for university education which determines the growth or the suppression of the culture of a people. The grouping up of subjects in these two Universities is different from the Indian Universities. Wherever the Tamils live or where a University serves the Tamil people, the Tamil will must count and prevail, and the Universities must provide what the Tamil people need or want. Tamilians had not much control or influence in the rule making powers of these Universities, and it rested with the non-Tamilians who are ignorant of Classical Tamil. This accounts for the nonrecognition of Classical Tamil as a subject for study in these Universities.

3. Tamil occupies a unique place among the languages of the world. It is one of the oldest languages, more ancient than Latin, Sanscrit or Pali. It is also a living modern language of no mean order. It has sufficient Classics for the young and the old. The past generation of Tamils has prescribed 18 books for the young which should be studied before one takes up to higher Classics. Rt. Rev. R. Caldwell, D.D., L.L.D, considered that Classical Tamil, Poetry or prose, considerably differred from the colloquial Tamil and from the every day speech of the Tamils and cannot be easily understood. I have therefore suggested to the authorities to divide Tamil into "Classical Tamil' and 'Modern Tamil' in view of the extent and the vast period involved and to give the "Classical Tamil" an equal place with Latin, Sanscrit, Pali etc, and to permit students to offer both 'Classical Tamil' and 'Modern Tamil' as separate subjects at the same examination. I also suggested that the Classical Tamil shall be studied progressively

from the lower forms as in the case of Latin or Sanscrit or following the system that prevailed under our Gurukula system of education. Neglect of one's own Classics and studying other Classics will not be fruitful. It is therefore necessary that provision must be made to enable one to study his own Classics and other Classics, also the Modern Tamil, at one and the same time. It is now hoped that the scholars and the Parliamentarians will take up this matter further.

Yours faithfully

(*Sd.*) (K. M. CHELLAPPAH).

Puttur,
Jaffna. 5—10—'53

REPLIES REFERRED TO ABOVE

1. *Director of Education, Ceylon.*
By letter No. E (E) 21/36 of 6—2—'37.

"The introduction of Classical Tamil as a special branch of study into the school curriculums and the Matriculation and equivalent examinations is considered unsuitable owing to the nature of the subject... This is in accordance with the views of the Principal, University College, and the Board of Moderators."

2. *The Ceylon University Council* —
Letter dated 18—11—'36.

"The Ceylon University Council, at a meeting held on 11—11—'36, agreed to recommend that the London University authorities be requested to consider the possibility of admitting Classical Tamil as an alternative to Latin or Greek (Classical languages) for the Intermediate examination in Arts. The Council further recommended that, if Classical Tamil and Tamil (distinct from Classical Tamil) are admitted as two different subjects in the scheme of subjects, no student shall be permitted to offer both the subjects at the same time."

3. *The London University.*
No. 1295. 2 / 29—1—'37.

"The whole question of Singalese and Tamil is being considered by a Special Committee before whom your observations will be laid shortly."

(WAR INTERVENED)

No. J. R. /O. W. 1295 of

17—7—'52.

"I very much regret that no reply appears to have reached you but I write to say that it was left that no action could be taken in the matter."

4. *The Civil Service Commission.*

Letter dated 25—1—'37

"I am directed by the Civil Service Commissioners to say that the choice of subjects which may be offered by candidates at open competitive examinations held under the enclosed regulations is already large and the Commissioners have come to the conclusion that it is undesirable to add to the number."

VOL. III NO. 1 JANUARY, 1954

TAMIL CULTURE

A Quarterly Review dedicated to the study of Tamiliana

The Teaching of Tamil

OF THE many recommendations made by the Indian Secondary Education Commission in its recent report, there are some that deserve the attention of not only professional teachers and educationists but also of all those generally interested in the development of our national languages. If Tamil is to become an effective medium of modern thought and an apt instrument for citizenship in a democracy, the teaching of Tamil in our Schools and Colleges, and the training of teachers of Tamil should receive particular attention. "There is no enthusiasm, no creative urge to initiate an educational renaissance" says the report of the Commission, and if this lack of enthusiasm and creativity be true of teachers in general, it is not in any way less true of lecturers and teachers of Tamil.

This state of inertia is partly due to the sense of frustration that prevails among lecturers and teachers because of the poor terms and conditions of service, but it is also due to the low standards and inadequate training of language teachers. With the change over to the mother-tongue medium, one would think it necessary that the teacher of Tamil be well-equipped, well-read, urbane and polished as the teacher of Latin or Greek, or even the teacher of English was believed to be in the colonial period. One would expect that the era is over when the Tamil pundit provided a good deal of mirth and laughter at his own expense, possibly because of his stilted, artificial style, his crude manners, his blissful ignorance of the ways of the modern world and the English

language and his reaction to progress unauthenticated by tradition. One would expect too that the period is past when he used to be a secluded figure in the staff-room and on the campus, rather a museum-piece out of the past than an educationist engrossed in the problems of the present. One has a right to expect that he is now able to use modern methods of teaching and can make a public address or engage in conversation without frequent appeals to authority supported by hackneyed quotations. One has a right to expect all this and more but the Report of the Secondary Education Commission does not find enough justification to sketch an optimistic portrait of the language teacher. It says very cryptically "Any teacher, however poorly qualified, has been considered good enough to teach the mother tongue". And later, "If well-qualified and well-trained teachers can take up the teaching of the mother-tongue in this progressive spirit, it may well raise the whole level and quality of education."

It is difficult to understand why in Ceylon the teaching of Tamil in the higher forms of certain secondary schools is entrusted to persons who have had no training, and who have no higher qualification than a pass in Tamil in the S. S. C. examination. While trained graduates are sought for other subjects, the heads of schools seem to feel that Tamil may be taught anyhow by anyone.

Not only are the qualifications and the training of teachers so unsatisfactory that the hope of a brilliant Tamil Renaissance is denied to this generation, but the tools too with which the teachers have to work, namely, text-books and books of general reading, are poor and insufficient for educational adventure. When dealing with text-books, with books of general reading and with library books, the Commission has pointed out the need for a scientific approach to their compilation and production. "The bulk of the evidence that was tendered, particularly by teachers in schools and colleges, indicated that there was a great de-

terioration in the standard of text-books at present prescribed to students..... We have referred elsewhere to the great paucity of books of reference in the regional languages for school libraries. We feel that unless active attempts are made to bring out a number of such publications as well as books in the regional languages and in the official language of the union, the all round development of the pupil will be seriously handicapped. Teachers also should have more books available to them in the languages so that they may with profit refer to them and keep their knowledge up-to-date.... We may, in passing, make a reference here to the associated problem of the production of suitable books for children and adolescents. At present there is a great paucity of such books in practically all Indian languages and unless the Centre and the State Governments take well thought-out measures to encourage the production of suitable books for *general reading* the objective in view cannot be realized — books suitable not only from the point of view of contents but also of *printing, binding* and *illustrations.* This may be done by giving financial assistance to qualified and well established organizations engaged in the production of such books, by offering prizes to the best books published and by arranging translations of good children's books available in English or published in various regional languages.....

We recommend that in regard to other languages also, whether the mother-tongue or regional language, there is need for a reorientation of the methods adopted in teaching the language. To try to cram into the young pupil, a number of abstract terms and definitions of grammar and syntax, long before the student has learnt to read fluently simple prose, is to create in the young mind an aversion for language classes. A contributory factor is the dearth of simple and entertaining reading matter in the language capable of creating in the pupil a desire and an eagerness to peruse such books. With the emphasis now placed rightly on the mother-tongue or regional language, we hope that (a) teachers of languages will be given training in the methods to be

adopted in such teaching, and (b) that every encouragement will be given to well qualified persons to produce books in prose and poetry suited to the different stages of education of school children.

We are greatly dissatisfied with the present standard of production of school books and consider it essential that this should be radically improved. Most of the books submitted and prescribed are poor specimens in every way — the paper is usually bad, the printing is unsatisfactory, the illustrations are poor and there are numerous printing mistakes. If such books are placed in the hands of students, it is idle to expect that they would acquire any love for books or feel interest in them or experience the joy that comes from handling an attractively produced publication."[1]

It has been estimated in English-speaking countries that to equip a student for post--school reading of newspapers and books and for intelligent citizenship in a democracy, it would be necessary for the student to have read a total of some five million words during his school career from ten to fifteen years. Thus will he become familiar with the twenty to thirty thousand words which adult reading requires. A total reading of five million words may appear a great quantity, but if the average English book for boys and girls consists of thirty thousand words, all that is required is the reading of some one hundred and seventy-five books[2]. The best students in some of the Indian and Cylon schools do more than this required reading in English. Assuming that an equal number of words read would also be necessary for the student who is educated through the Tamil medium (there is no apparent reason why the same amount of reading practice would not be necessary), and supposing that the Tamil books are on an average of ten thousand words each

---

[1] Report of the Secondary Education Commission, 1953, pp. 114, 70, 96.

[2] A. F. WATTS. The language and mental development of children, p. 106, London, 1950.

(and generally they are slender), it would be necessary for the student to read some five hundred books during his school life. If allowances are made for the reading practice that he will obtain from the Tamil textbooks and newspapers which may total a million words during his course of studies, we shall yet have to provide him with the four-hundred books of general interest, viz: travel, fiction, romance, history, popular science, adventure, biography and religion which will give him the four million words of reading.

It is with the greatest amount of good will that one would be able to draw up a list of a hundred such books in Tamil. As for books of the "Robinson Crusoe", "Books of insects" or "Voyages of the Discovery", "A journey to the Moon" type they are, alas, too few. Some of these juveniles have been translated into Tamil, but often the translator summarises the story and restricts the vocabulary to such an extent by a stilted and artificial style that the educational value of the originals is lessened. Further, a large number of original works with a familiar background of life and interest, is necessary for the systematization of experience and for the quickening and enlarging of children's sympathies. Such original works are required not only in prose but also in poetry. The influence of good poetry on the development of language and feeling is so great that there should be a reasonable output of poetry centering around schoolboy interests and within the range of his aesthetic life. But what is actually now given the student of Tamil is a great deal of gnomic verse and recondite classical poetry better suited for adults and specialists in the history of literature.

To the student who reads English, comics and thrillers fulfil at least this purpose of providing an interest in reading. In Tamil these means of creating interest are generally wanting, and it might not be altogether a bad thing that they are wanting. In vain do we turn to our daily newspapers in Tamil for help. They do not provide that variety of interest and that wealth of ideas [redacted] we wish to present to the

pupil. Nor are they noted for precision, accuracy and restraint. One can seldom rely on the foreign news carried by Tamil dailies. One prefers to have them direct from the English newspapers without the intervention of translators that ignore the shades and nuances of the original English words. A study of Reuter messages and their translations in Tamil will show that the translations are more general, more vague and more exaggerated. Further the Tamil newspapers carry only about half the reading matter that English newspapers carry. Journalism in Tamil has yet a long way to go before it can serve the finer needs of language development of the school going population.

* * *

It is unfortunate that the emphasis so far has been just on technical terms and text-books to the exclusion of lingustic power. It may be that even a teacher of science knows all the technical terms in Tamil and has the necessary text-books, but he may be so poorly equipped in verbal expression that his lessons have no great interest or value. Similarly, it would be possible to teach all the terms necessary to Government officials and yet obtain the most bewildering results in official language. What matters is not the number of words a person knows but word power. There is a marked difference between the person who says "He is not sure of the place to which he will be going last," and the person who says "He is not sure of his ultimate destination." The greater number of words used is not evidence of greater linguistic power.

It would be unjustifiable for Principals of schools to send as teachers of the mother-tongue medium, men who have not given proof of their knowledge of the language and literature of the mother-tongue. Since the mother-tongue is taught through every subject taught through its medium, it will be incumbent also on Science teachers to be able to use Tamil as a flexible, free and easy medium of expression. And such a free and easy use of language on the part of teachers of

Science is even more necessary in the lower forms than in the upper forms.

What has been said about English in England is applicable to the mother-tongue in any country. The Hadow Report, for instance, says, "English should not be treated as a isolated subject confined to certain definite periods assigned to it in the time-table. In every branch of the curriculum pupils should be trained to express their ideas either orally or in writing, in accurate and appropriate language. It will be therefore be advisable to exercise a careful supervision over the use of English in every subject." And George Sampson in his usual vigorous manner says that the mother-tongue is a condition of existence rather than a subject of instruction([3]).

A course of instruction in the mother tongue to qualified English trained teachers is one means of over-coming the dearth in Ceylon of teachers capable of the Tamil medium. But the dearth of text-books as well as of supplementary and general reading material is not so easily met. The obvious solution would be to organise schools of translators under the auspices and direction of the University or of the training Colleges. This was what the Arabs and Europeans of the Middle Ages did to enrich themselves with Greek thought, and the Chinese and the Japanese did to enrich themselves with Indian thought. But in order to write or translate school books, a great amount of research concerning vocabulary and word frequency has to precede their writing. Tamil text-books now in use have paid little attention to the progressive linguistic development of the pupil. And Tamil translations of English originals used in the sixth standard of some of the Ceylon schools may well be prescribed for a class taught at University level. The translators have given full play to their knowledge of classical Tamil and used classical and obsolete linguistic forms and structures without any regard

[3] See RYBURN, *The teaching of the mother-tongue*, p. 5, Madras, 1950.

whatsoever to the linguistic equipment of a sixth standard pupil. The result is that the Tamil translation is far more complicated than the original. The study of a text book on history becomes more a struggle with language than a reader which professedly teaches language. Neither have Text-Book Committees been a great help in approving and grading books submitted to them. "It was brought to our notice in this connection", says the Report, "that the commercial side of the production of text-books has also adversely affected their proper selection. The practice in some States is to prescribe only one text-book in each subject for each class. In view of the very large number of pupils studying in these forms, the approval of a book by the Committee meant large profits to the publishers and the financial stakes involved sometimes resulted in undue influences being brought to bear on the members of the Committees. Evidence tendered left no doubt that such influences did interfere with the proper selection of text-books. As a result of this, text-books were often prescribed which were too difficult or too easy for the class concerned or were defective in language and in the manner of presentation and sometimes abounded in factual mistakes." (p. 97)

The compilation of word-frequency lists, both specific (say for subjects like Physics, History, Geography) and general like the lists Thorndike and Dewey have worked out for English are the basis on which instruction through the mother-tongue should be progressively promoted.

As for original works, the Secondary Commission has made recommendations which, if put into practice, will certainly result in more creative works both in prose and in poetry. Not the least important of these recommendations is the granting of suitable honoraria to authors and royalties to publishers whose books are taken over by the Department of Education, and the appointing of Committees of experts who will be impartial in their judgement of books to be approved for use in schools.

The Teaching of Tamil in Colleges and Schools has been too long subject to the malady of mediocrity. Our best men should be recruited as Tamil lecturers and teachers; they should be given the most attractive terms of service and trained along the lines of the most recent research in language teaching. It is then that Tamil will become a condition of existence.

A Study of Kabilar, the Sangam Poet

C. JESUDASON, M.A.

KABILAR THE MAN

WE KNOW little of the Sangam poets. Distance has dwarfed their personalities. Their histories have become clouded with myth, with legends of gods and goddesses; even the semblance of truth is not left to them. Had the Sangam poets been subjective, had they been free to reveal their intimate feelings, we would have understood something of the human element lying behind their purely literary greatness. But those were days of kings and chieftains who patronized the men of letters; the poets were bound by obligations to them. To cramp their literary scope further, appeared a wohle series of literary conventions and regulations. There was a set code of rules for Aham or love-poetry, and another for Puram or non-love poetry; for, the ancients had drawn a line between love and all that is not related to love. In days when war was an exciting daily problem, no wonder a young man could divide his life broadly into love and war. Hence these two aspects of human life were accepted, and developed on strictly separate lines by the bards whose duty it was to sing of life.

Aham poetry, or Sangam love-poetry, gives practically no clues to the personalities of the poets. When they were so much preoccupied with imaginary romances of passionate young people, and forcing them into the convention of the day, what room could there be for self-revelation? So, natu-

---

C. Jesudason, M.A., is Head of the Department of Tamil, University College, Trivandrum.

rally for a study of Kabilar the Man, we have to go elsewhere. Puram poems found in Purananūru and Padirruppattu help us better.

Internal evidence in Purananūru shows that Kabilar was a Brahmin by birth. He says of himself, "I, a Brahmin and a poet". We may take that as the final word, in deciding, as a matter of curiosity, his caste. There is nothing to prove the myth that Kabilar was one of the twelve children born of a Brahmin father and a Pulaya mother.

There is evidence that Kabilar was held in reverence and affection by his contemporaries. Contemporary references to him are uniformly respectful.

> "*Renowned Kabilar, in wisdom great*
> *Of silver tongue, creating verse*
> *Surcharged with truth*", says one poet (*Puram* ; 53).
> "*Kabilar, whose voice is truth*", says another.
> (*Puram* ; 174).

Kabilar is the Sangam poet to whose greatness we can find the greatest number of tributes in Sangam literature. He must have been a poet really worthy of love.

We need to study Kabilar's *Puram* poems closely, and take their revelations at their face-value. Kabilar shows close acquaintance with several of the great chieftains and kings of Tamilnad. Of these, he pays glowing tributes to Cheraman Selvakkadungo Vazhi Adan, the king of Chera land, and to two chieftains, lesser men in rank, but equally great in renown — Kāri, and the immortal Pāri whose name cannot be separated from Kabilar's. We find Kabilar boldly flinging a reproach on another chieftain, Irungo Vēl, who he believed, had slighted him. Beautiful is the story that all these poems have to tell, and, although we do not have them in the exact sequence of their creation, we may use our discretion in arranging them before we elicit from them the life-story of this great and revered poet.

We have no positive means of deciding whether his acquaintance with Kāri was early or late in Kabilar's life, but the fact is that after his contact with Pāri, almost everything that he wrote in *Puram* is coloured by that sublime friendship. Since this colouring is absent in his praises of Kāri, we might deduce that at any rate Kabilar met Kāri first, before his friendship with Pāri began. In one little poem, we find a half-reproachful advice to Kāri,

> *"To know one's deserts is the task ...."*
> *Regard not poets with an equal eye"* (*Puram* : 121)

Evidently Kari has treated him, not slightingly, but not quite according to his deserts. Perhaps he made no difference in the favours he bestowed on Kabilar and the other poets who came to his court. Considering how highly Kabilar came to be regarded in his day, it is not likely that Kāri, being man of sense, should not have given Kabilar that distinction which was his due, had Kabilar been introduced to him as a full-blown poet. Perhaps Kabilar, conscious of his own potential powers, and not being yet given full recognition, resented being treated as one of the many. So we may ascribe Kabilar's first intimacy with Kāri, if not to the poet's extreme youth, at least to the beginning of his poetic career. The above-quoted reproach to Kāri, we find, is not justified by any real want of discretion on the part of that generous patron of letters, for in another poem we find the poet bursting into rhapsodies over the generosity of the chieftain. Obviously, by this time the poet and his patron have come to a better understanding :

> *"Kāri, thy land*
> *Belongs to Brahmins feeding sacred fires :*
> *.................... thy wealth*
> *Is theirs who come to thee with plea for alms ;*
> *.................... Except thy Queen,*
> *Nothing is thine, O noble one !"*
>
> (*Puram* : 122)

There is a poem addressed to Pēhan, a Tamil chieftain, for which by no means can we fix the period of its creation, since it is an isolated instance of his acquaintance with him. It only shows Kabilar exercising his moral authority as a poet, as one of the unacknowledged legislators of the world, and in this office he is not alone, for we find several poets addressing Pēhan on the same subject and in the same time. The point is that Pēhan had neglected his wife for some temporary fancy, and the queen was pining for him. We find a group of poets sympathising with and championing the queen's cause, and fearlessly pointing out to a powerful chieftain the wrong he was doing. The other poets of that group are Paranar, Arisilkilar and Perun-kunrurkilar and by reason of this proof we may safely assume Kabilar to be their contemporary. What we are surprised at is the fact that continued dependence on a patron's favours should not have weakened the morale of the poets, and that they should keep their claim to their sovereign throne all the while that they were no more than mendicants in their society. Fortunately this claim was recognised and honoured by the Tamil Kings.

Now comes the story of Kabilar's friendship with Pāri. It is an idyl of friendship. Kabilar never found his tongue untied so much as when speaking of his beloved patron. They were not as patron and devotee, but as bosom friends. Kabilar is eloquently lyrical in his praises of Pāri, and they are not hypocritical effusions, for Kabilar's voice can be nothing but truth. He stops at nothing in his praises.

"Pāri, Pāri, praise the Silver-tongued ;
Yet 'tis not only he,
But rains we have, to bring prosperity,"

(*Puram* : 143)

cries the poet, as though it is difficult for him to see that there could be any benefactor in the world other than Pāri.

"Pāri Vel, more yieldi~~soft than water,"

(*Puram* : 143)

he says, mentioning his friend's gentle manners to his dependents, the poets.

Pāri's mountain is Kabilar's delight. Its mountain-springs he compares to stars. He never tires of singing of its beauties. The glory of Pāri's name in Sangam literature, is transferred to his mountain, to its mountain springs, to the flowers that bloom in their cool waters.

And Kabilar was no time-server. Pāri's glory fascinated the poets, but, it would seem, not the thriving kings of his day. Perhaps they were jealous of his name. Perhaps they simply coveted his prosprous territory. Anyway they did not shrink from laying siege to his dominions. The three kings of Tamilnād took part in the siege, which shows that Pāri must have been pretty strong. Kabilar might have seen that his friend was doomed, but he did not change sides. He shouted a challenge down at the besiegers. He told them, if they really wanted Pāri's country, they should come, not as warriors, but as minstrels, when he

"would give them land and hill together!"

The result of the battle was what might have been expected. Pāri was killed; and with him set the sun of Kabilar's happiness. Kabilar would gladly have died with him, but the unfortunate chieftain had two unmarried daughters, whom he could entrust safely to no one but his friend. Pāri, with forethought, charged Kabilar not to commit suicide.

We find the bereaved poet, with an aching heart, taking with him the luckless daughters of Pāri, away from the paternal roof, from the mountain where "the squeezed out honey comb oozes with honey," which no longer affords them shelter. The Sangam anthologies bear evidence to their being no ordinary girls, but gifted with literary aptitude. Their lamentations over their father are part of Sangam literature. It is no wonder, living as they did with a father who was himself a passionate lover of letters, and under the

eye of a poet who was a king in the realm of poetry ! However, literary talent did not preclude them from the rights of woman-hood, and Kabilar knew that his duty was to hand them over to suitable husbands. It is pathetic to watch the unworldly-minded poet going husband-hunting for his young charges among the men of the world. Kabilar would not give the noble girls to any but of noble blood, and those who were of high social status evidently did not want the fatherless and helpless girls who had nothing to back them except the sounding name of Pāri. They refused, one after the other and Kabilar seems to have been irritated with one of them. That was Irungo-Vel who probably turned them from his door. The chieftain must have been particularly impolite, and the poet turned his anger on him.

"I go," he said, "My lord, forgive
The foolish pride of mine, in that these
Are mighty Pari's daughters." (*Puram* : 201). And then like a prophet roused to utter a curse, he reminds Irungo of an ancestor of his who lost lands and living because he had the insolence to insult the poet Kalâtalayār.

The failure to find suitable husbands for the girls, seems to have dejected Kabilar to the extent of leaving his wards under the care of Brahmins, (see colophons to *Puram*: 113, 200, 201 etc.), and seeking the patronage of Selvakadungo Vāzhi Adan. Now it is not possible for us to believe that this Chera prince belonged to the powerful trio that beseiged the unfortunate Pāri. The first of Kabilar's *Padirrupattu* poems, addressed to this prince, is full of tender references to Pāri, and shows the poet proudly soliciting Chēramān's patronage :

"I come not begging alms of thee, because
My generous patron Pāri, for that land left
From which there can be no return."
(*Padirrupattu* : 61)

All of Kabilar's *Padirrupattu* poems are full of the praises of Cheraman Selvakadungo Vazhi Adan's military prowess,

and his generosity. The same prince, it is to be remembered, is honoured by Kabilar in *Puranānūru*. This is how Kabilar addresses the Sun :

" Swift sphere, how dost resemble him,
King Cheraladan of victorious troops !"

(*Puram* : 8).

In the same poem, he gives a list of things which the Sun will do and Cheraman Selvakadungo will not.

" Thou hast a limit ; thou turnest thy back ;
Thou shiftest position ; hidest behind the hill !"

Another poem was written in reply to Vāzhi Ādan's remark that Kabilar's hands were very soft. They are soft, answers the poet, because,

" They know no other labour, save to feed
On savoury rice with fragrant meat."

(*Puram* : 14)

Then, says the poet, the monarch's hands are hard, because they have been employed in hard work, in managing the horses in war, and in giving gifts to the poor ! Is that not a great compliment ?

But there is no evidence of this newly formed bond continuing. Kabilar was not the man to forget old loyalties. *Puram* 236 says briefly that Kabilar fasted to death. The Tirukōvalūr inscriptions say that he gave away Pāri's daughter to the chieftain Malayan, and finally joined his friend by leaping into the flames. Anyway it seems likely that the poet did commit suicide after all, having first provided for his wards.

Kabilar's Love Poetry

We have seen Kabilar's *Puram* poems in the study of his life ; and they are so intimately bound with his life, that despite their subjection to convention, it is not worth while considering them as effusions of art. But when we come to

Aham or love-poetry, we find the exercise of 'art for art's sake". They seem to have been pretty deeply sophisticated our forefathers of about thousand and five hundred years ago. They had made quite a separate study of love, drawn rules and regulations for it, and compiled them into a grammar book! So it was, that Tolkāppiyar the wise old grammarian, prescribes exactly the kind of treatment that should be accorded by the poets to every kind of love.

The clandestine love of young lovers, thought those bards, found its most exciting setting in mountain scenery. The lover climbing the beaten tracks up the rocks, braving the elephants, avoiding the snakes and tigers, all for meeting his beloved, made matter for stories of adventure. The mountainous region, in the language of those poets, is called the Kurinji. The sandy waste or Palai was considered a fit background for the unwilling parting of the lover from his beloved, and for the elopement of bold young lovers. Marutham, the land of plenty, watered by rivers, where man finds leisure to spend over and above the time he needs for cultivation, and where luxury is within reach, is the setting for unfaithful lovers. Of course, it is the 'hero' who is unfaithful. There are five such groups into which the land is divided by Sangam convention, and each has a characteristic part to play in the bond between young lovers.

Kabilar chooses Kurinji for elaboration. He is considered the prince of Kurinji literature. The authorship of *Kurinjikkali* is ascribed to Kabilar mainly for this reason. Kabilar wrote his *Kurunji-pāttu* so the colophon says, to instruct an Arya prince in the strange complexities of ancient Tamil poetic convention.

Kurinji-pāttu must be briefly glanced at, because it really reveals something of Kurinji convention. The poem is said to be the words of the heroine's maid to her mother, the heroine's attendant. Mind, the story is said to be a pure fiction of the clever girl's brain made up to smooth mismanaged matters.

Her lady is involved in a love affair, and being probably a mountain chieftain's daughter, is perplexed because her parents are likely to give her away to her lover. Now it is desirable to disclose the love-affair and get the wedding over. The maid, who is in the know of things, is the person to break the news. She dares not speak to her lady's mother, so she speaks to her own mother, who has great influence in the household. This is the gist of her pretty story :

The heroine and her attendant are out in the cornfields, scaring the birds away. They bathe in the springs, and deck themselves with all the wildflowers they can reach. There comes to the spot a young hunter, who is also fantastically dressed and looks interesting. The girls however, are too shy to speak to him. But fate throws the heroine into the hero's arms, in the shape of a stray elephant who comes there trumpetting and frightens the girls. The tusker is driven from the spot by an arrow from the bold young man. Now the hero and heroine feel themselves united by providence and plight troth. So under the circumstances, the maid pleads that the best thing would be to see the two wedded.

Kurinji-pāttu is pretty and youthful enough, but it must not be given undue praise. It has few of Kabilar's usual outbursts of brilliance and it has one defect not elsewhere found in him, that is, the lengthy catalogue of flowers. But it does show the general characteristics of Kurinji — the wild romance, the mountain scenery and the adventurous spirit. The lady's maid, we must say, plays a very active part in Kabilar's love-stories, and is more ingenious and attractive than her meek mistress who is only a bundle of nerves.

Kabilar's real achievement is in the field of imagery, rather than dramatic representations from life. Of course, even in these little tit-bits from the drama of life, he keeps his head above water, and does not muddle things. In this chapter we shall consider his purely dramatic approach to love, reserving his wonderful imagery for a chapter by itself.

Ainkurunuru is a collection of five-hundred short poems as the name itself suggests, and one hundred of these were composed by Kabilar. Their brevity makes them sometimes all the more telling. Tamil, with its wonderful monosyllabes, is one of the most concise of languages. The *Tirukkural* is an example of the condensation of thought that is possible in Tamil. *Ainkurunuru* is an example of the condensation of feeling, of experience, that the great poets could manage.

The following is one of Kabilar's *Ainkurunuru* :

" Hail, lady hear ! sweeter than the milk
With honey in our land, the muddied drops
The deer had left beneath
The scrubs in his dry desert land."

The heroine has come as a guest to the paternal roof. Her husband is in no easy circumstances, and her former attendant, the playmate of her childhood, anxiously enquires after her welfare. The above is the young wife's reply. What pride of wifehood it shows in her !

In yet another, we find the heroine pining for her absent lover. Her parents note her pallor, and are worried about her ill-health, ignorant of its true cause. As common in those days, they enquire of astrologers and men who profess to deal with spirits. They are told that the girl is afflicted by the spirit of Muruga. To appease the troublesome spirit, the devotee of Muruga makes his weird dance, in the sight of the household. But it matters little to the heroine, whereas to her attendant, it affords laughter and an opportunity of delicately breaking the truth to the elders in the house. So, that clever girl in the hearing of her mother, asks her young mistress, amidst a ripple of girlish laughter :

" He sings of Muruga ; and is that then
Thy lover's name ? "

If the girl's mother were a woman of the least delicate perception, she would at once have scented the hint.

In one of these poems, an isolated instance of its kind in Kabilar's poetry, we find bitter irony. The injured woman speaks of the faithless husband thus :

"In this hilly land,
The wild-boar with his crescent horn doth guard
His fine-striped young, whose dam the tiger killed ;
But he forsakes, with me, his golden son !"

In yet another, there is a cunning little attendant for the heroine. The heroine's movements have awakened suspicion, and she is being watched. The lover, who has not yet dared to make the formal proposal to her parents, comes stealing about the house. The attendant speaks to the lady of the house in a voice loud enough for him to hear. This is what the girl says : "My lady fears to go in the dark. She fears the hooting of the owls. And you say you saw her steal out at night ! Surely that was a hallucination of your brain !" We can imagine the reaction of those words on the three listeners specially on the lover, who would infer that, if he wanted to see his lady, he must first get her hand in marriage.

There is ample variety of mood and situation. The heroine speaks in confidence to her attendant ; the maid works out little ruses ; the mother whose daughter has eloped, mourns that her daughter should have had so little confidence in her. All these are subjected to Sangam convention, but they are dramatically treated, with a brilliant imagination, and a diction of rare sweetness. Diction, of course, cannot be described, nor can it be translated. But the sensitive modulations and the gentle rhythm of Kabilar's style in general, are their best in the poem beginning "Yārum illai, tānē kalvan." The following is a feeble translation of the poem :

"None else was there, but only he, the thief ;
Should he be false, what should I do ?
And when we met, there was in our sight,
Only the stork, with leg as thin as a wisp of straw,
That into the gliding water peered for prey."

The same qualities can be found in Kabilar's poems of the other anthologies of Sangam love-poetry. It would only be tedious to go through the same process. The difference is mostly in length and in corresponding elaboration of the central idea. It only remains for us to consider the beauty of the imagery in Kabilar's poetry.

Imagery in Kabilar

Imagery is not everything in poetry ; it is only incidental to poetry, as the flashing spray is to the momentous strength of the ocean. The workings of the mighty spirit within are given expression to in colourful and living pictures and by their vitality and beauty we may more or less assess the power of the driving force.

Sangam poetry is not epic poetry, nor did our ancient poets spend time over the drama, though they sometimes passed over dramatic situations in life ; even in the sphere of the lyric, they did not excel. Those poets seem to have been too self-controlled, too conservative and conventional, to have let themselves go in the ebullitions of the lyric. Their greatness lies in the wonderful pen-pictures they have produced. Sometimes indeed, like Scott, they get themselves to describe a forest from one end to the other, till we are tired and surfeited with the details. Sometimes like Wordsworth, they suddenly find themselves awake to the meaning and the beauty of some particular image, and then the glory of it fills the record of their inspired vision. At other times, not rare in Sangam literature, we find their similes revealing entirely new worlds of profound thought and beauty, for which we are at a loss to find a parallel in another language.

Kabilar, one of the major poets of the Sangam age, displays these qualities in his verse. In surfeit of detail however, he indulges but once in *Kurinji-pāttu* where a whole catalogue of mountain-flowers is unfolded. Like every cata-

logue, it would have made dreary reading, but the swift strong lilt of the metre carries it lightly through. It may be dismissed however as an isolated instance of weakness, it being not at all like Kabilar to waste words. We have only to consider Kabilar's descriptive gift and his similes.

Like his contemporary poets, Kabilar is daring in his use of imagery, and at the same time faithful to observation. The grotesque conceits which disfigure the pages of later Tamil literature, are absent from Sangam literature. Perhaps the immense discipline involved in the enforcement of convention is responsible for the strict purity of Sangam diction. Imagination is strong, but not out of control. The most audacious step the poet's fancy can take, is perhaps this :

" The wild boar flees splashing around gold and gems "
(*Puram* : 202).

" The elephant
Sacred of the mighty tiger, makes furious charge
Upon the black-stemmed vengai tree, and thus
Abates its wrath."
(*Narrinai* : 217)

or this :

" The wine delicious, in the mountain-spring
Among the rocks with pepper strewn, is brewed
By the tout-stemmed mango's fruit delicious, dropped
With honeycombs bee-haunted, and the fruit,
Fragrant, of jack, loosening its seeds "
(*Kurinjippāttu*)

The Sangam poets do not generally, love ugly conceits. They love truth better, and I shall quote here some of Kabilar's simple, faithful observations of nature, to show how lovely truth can be :

" The crocodile dozes in the woodland stream,
So strewn with YOWER*-petals shaken down,*
That its own hue is lost "
(*Aham* : 136)

" There was in our sight
Only the stork, with leg as thin as a wisp of straw,
That into the gliding water peered for prey."
(*Kuruntohai* : 25)

" The young one of the monkey in the Sun
Rolls to and fro the peafowl's egg, laid
Neglected on the rocks."
(*Kuruntohai* : 38)

" The swing's long rope
That scarred the bending bough "
(*Narrinai* : 222)

" The tiger lies in wait
Under the jack-tree's shadows thick, wherein
Its fruit hangs, for the toddling offspring that
In deep dense glades she-elephants brought forth."
(*Aham* : 161)

" The tusker huge
Trumpets, because the mist comes to conceal
His slumbering mate.....upon the mountain side."
(*Narrinai* : 222)

Kabilar's mind teems with images of the mountainous country. Tradition and *Purananūru* bear evidence to his beautiful attachment to Pāri, generous patron of poets. Pāri's hill, it seems, was very fertile.

" Think you but lightly of great Pari's hill ?
Four gifts, it gives without man's sweated toil ;
First, golden paddy with slim blades yields its grain;
Second, the sweet-fleshed jack-fruit ripens there ;
Thirdly, potatoes sweet send down fat roots :
Fourthly, the honeycomb, o'erspread with blue,
Drips honey on the hill !
(*Puram* : 109)

The thought of Pāri, indeed, colours his *puram* poems. Else, why should he compare the looks of a mountain-beauty, to 'cool springs of Pāri's hills ?' Also it looks as though

it is from Pāri's mountainside that Kabilar cultivated his taste for the jack-fruit. The mention of the jack-fruit runs through his poems, and it is only saved from being a sickly obsession by the ever-renewing zest which he can bring to the image. No two sunsets are alike in nature ; and often as the images of the jackfruit may occur in Kabilar, no two images are exactly alike. Speaking of Pāri's hill, he says,

" There from the fresh wound in the jack's ripe fruit
The breezes scatter honey "

(*Padirruppattu* : 61)

Describing a woodsman's home, he sees

" The yard where from the fruitful jack depends
Huge fruit on every bough "

(*Narrinai* : 320)

Bounteous Nature is complete only with the jack.

" The little stone
Sped from the woodsman's catapult, shot
Like an arrow, scattering vengai flowers, spills
The honey from the comb, and then it rests
Within the jack's sweet fruit "

(*Aham* : 292)

But wherever, and whenever he mentions the jack, it is always with a gusto, as though he has just tasted,

" Honey that oozes in the pulp
of the sweet-fruited jack "

(*Aham* : 182)

Even dismissing Kabilar's close acquaintance with Pāri's beloved hill, there is reason for Kabilar sticking to the details of the greenwood. Nature is glorious in all her aspects. But Kabilar studied the mountains. For this, Sangam convention is somewhat responsible. The mountains were the conventional setting for the romantic meeting of young lovers. The theme appealed to Kabilar. Kabilar barely touches on the other aspects of love, as though they do not suit his taste. Separation, lovers' tiffs, jealousy, and unfaithfulness are

comparatively unlovely themes. Kabilar leaves them to other poets. It is Kurinji, that is young love, that he loves to treat, and he is at home with passionate young lovers in sylvan surroundings. This is the land that Kabilar loved to picture.

"The wind that tears among the swaying grove,
Of hollowed bamboos, makes flute-music wild
The sweeping cataract makes humming sounds,
The deer's cry is a sounding-pipe ; a harp
The bee, that haunts the flowery mountainside ;
And drunk with such sweet music, the monkeys gaze
At the peacock, dancing near the bamboo-clumps
Like a dancer on the stage: Such is his land"

(*Aham* : 82)

In passing, we might observe that this passage strikes us with its resemblance to a familiar passage in *Kambaramayanam* — the description of Marutham. Perhaps Kambar drew his inspiration from his predecessor.

Kabilar, master of description, is also master of simile and metaphorical language ; His similes startle us by their acute observation of truth, and by their colourfulness. See these :

"Her eardrops glancing like a lightning-streak"

(*Aham* : 158)

"The Vengai shakes its blossoms down, as sparks
Of fire that in the smithy fly"

(*Narrinai* : 13)

"There in the Vengai tree with bloom ablaze
The long-plumed peacock like a damsel sits,
That gathers flowers"

(*Ainkuru nuru* : 297)

"Feeble her life: but O her love is great
As the mighty jack fruit whose support
Is but a slender bough"

(*Kuruntohai*: 18)

5

"At that her eyes were filled with tears, like cups
Of hyacinths that opened in the pool,
Bee-haunted, their many petals now disturbed
And filled with chilly raindrops"

(*Kuruntohai*: 291)

Perhaps never were similes more astounding than those in the following poem :

"The Hero from the land, where hanging roots
Of trees pour white among the rocks, like fall
Of cataracts down mountainsides, has sent
His message from his guiltless heart ; and we
Maiden, receive it as the fire the oil
That feeds it"

(*Kuruntohai*: 106)

This can how the heroine receives a love-message from her young hero. One needs to pause and observe the beauty of the similes. All the strict conventions of Sangam literature have not annihilated the play of the imagination, they have only purged it of falseness, and taught it to select all familiar images, the sparks in the smithy, the oil leaping to the fire the girl gathering flowers—every object of daily observation, provided it is true. It brings us near to Shakespeare, the poet who would not blush to write such a homely simile as "dry as the remainder biscuit after a voyage."

Like every born poet, Kabilar employs metaphor ; or to speak more exactly, breaks out into metaphorical language. The lover begs permission to be absent for a few days, the heroine's attendant, acting as spokeswoman, answers bitterly,

"The cranes in groups upon the white sand-dune
The northwinds blow : O go thou not, to where
In the rocky country, the humming stream does sweep
Rich jewels in its course down mountainsides"

(*Ainkuru nuru* : 233)

Is not the suggestion obvious ?

In another poem, whose kind is rare in Kabilar's poetry, a woman reproaches an unfaithful lover :

" The cranes in groups upon the white sand—dune
Ranged like the armies of the king, peer down
For luscious fathead fish, within the cold
And mighty streams in your domains !"

(*Narrinai* : 291)

But the peak of Kabilar's achievement in metaphor is in *Ahananuru* 42. Like all the very greatest poetry, it is untranslateable. The surge of feeling and the loveliness of the monosyllables, cannot be recaptured in another language. But first giving the context of the image, I proceed with a feeble translation, the best within my reach.

The lover has long been absent. The heroine and her attendant have been pining. But the maid who is on the watch, spies him one day, returning to her lady's house ; she is beside herself with joy as she runs to her lady with the news. Let us see how she describes her state of mind :

" Within my soul was showered all the joy,
Of folks, one happy morning, when the rain
In torrents filled the tanks that erewhile lay
Dry, hot, with rising banks, that even the birds
Forsook, when drought prolonged itself, the while
The land lay famished, and idle lay the plough "

(*Aham* : 42)

Sons of the soil in the Deccan, whose hope of the harvest is in the clouds, will realize best the force of that image.

Kabilar's imgery is the wealth of his poetry. His pen-pictures are no mere idle ornaments, which can be put on and off at will. They are like flowers, which rich and lovely, and whose sustenance is drawn from the roots of their life deep in mother earth, and they have another quality — they are immortal. Have they not survived the wreck of nearly thousand and five hundred years, and are they not still fresh and youthful ?

Tamil Loan Words in Greek

F. LEGRAND

WHEN READING Greek classical authors, as well as the Bible in the Greek text, I have been surprised many times by a number of words that look more or less like Tamil, or, to be more precise, seem to be of Dravidian origin. In several instances, the similitude is so striking, since the meaning for the word is absolutely the same in both languages.

Is this mere coincidence? Greek itself has no connection whatever with the Dravidian languages: it is of Indo-European origin, having many affinities with Sanskrit and Latin, and other cognate languages; but practically nothing is known concerning their association with the agglutinative languages. Scholars like Albright, Cohen and Cuny have begun the work on the relationship that exists between various languages which they group together under the term "Nostratic" the common ancestor of Indo-European and Semite-Hamitic languages. The existence of certain language families, such as the Semitic-Egyptian group, are at present generally admitted. In the past ten years, two monographs have been published in this field, under the auspices of the French Groupe linguistique d'etudes chamite-semitiques (GLECS).[1] However, I am not aware of any scientific and thorough investigation having been done up to now concerning the relationship between Greek and the Dravidian languages. To my knowledge, only Autran has given some indications in this field

---

F. Legrand who lives in Ootacamund is a research worker in classical and biblical antiquity.

[1] A Cuny: Recherches sur le vocalisme, le consonantisme et la formation des racines en "nostratique,". Paris,1943.

A. Cuny: Invitation a l'etude comparative des langues indo-europeennes et des langues chamito-semitiques. Bordeaux, 1946,

of work. It is my intention here to show that there is some definite relationship between Greek and Tamil, though at first sight they seem to be languages so different in structure and lexicon.

How is it, then, that many words of Dravidian origin can be found in Greece, so far off from India? We know, through the works of Warmington, McCrindle, Cunningham and others, that the Romans and the Greeks had commercial relations with India about the beginning of the Christian era.[2] The commerce was so intense that even a temple was erected at Muziris in honour of Augustus, the Emperor of Rome, for the benefit of those Romans and Greeks who were coming to South India. But Greeks, Syrians, Jews and Arabians did most of the trading.

Now, among the products that were exported from India in those days, it is natural to find that imported articles which had not been known previously in Rome or Greece, should be known in Rome and Greece by the same word attached to them as in their place of origin. This is the reason why many of these words found their way into the Greek language. One such word is அரிசி *arisi*, rice, the staple food of South India, as it is of China, Indo-China and other Far-Eastern countries. This word has found its way to Greece, where it is called ορυζα *oryza*. Everybody acknowledges the oriental origin of the word. From this word have come also the Latin *oriza*, the French *riz*, the English, *rice*, the Italian *rizo*, the Spanish *arrez*. Though it is sometimes traced to Old Persian, there is no doubt about its ultimate Dravidian origin. The word is found without any change in the old Sangam poems: for instance, in Pattinappalai, reference is made to

வாலரிசிப் பலி சிதறி (v. 165)

"the white rice that is strewn as a sacrifice."

To my knowledge, nothing similar is found in sanskrit, where the word for rice is शालि *sāli, or* व्रीहि *vrihi.*

2 Warmington: The Commerce between the Roman Empire and India, p. 38.

Another article that was imported was pepper (πίπερί *piperi* in Greek, *piper* in Latin). The name comes from the Tamil பிப்பலி. This spice, according to the Periplus,[3] was exported in vast quantities from Muziris and Nelcynda, the two ports of Malabar and Travancore. பிப்பலி, *pippali,* means properly the long pepper, which was used chiefly in medicine ; but the word transplanted to far off countries, became the only word to designate all kinds of pepper. Latin authors especially make frequent references to pepper. Thus Horace, with much solemn pleasantry, is apprehensive of his book being taken away to wrap up frankincense, spices and pepper, like impertinent writings which only deserve such a thing :

Deferar in vicum vendentem thus et odores

Et piper et quidquid chartis amicitur ineptis.[4]

And in his Satires, he refers to "white pepper finely mixed with black salt :

Primus et invenior piper album cum sale nigro.[5]

The trade was very profitable, and in Pliny's time the black pepper was priced at four denarii a pound, the white seven, and the long fifteen.[6]

Ginger was also imported from India, and with it its name in Greek *zingiberi,* in Latin *gingiber,* coming naturally from the Tamil இஞ்சிவேர் *i.e.* the root of the green ginger. Dioscurides speaks of it as a good digestive,[7] and the recipes of Apicius indicate its frequent use as a food.[8]

μαλαβαθρον *malabathron,* in Latin malabathrum, is the cinnamon-leaf, coming from the mountains (மலை) of Malabar.

---

[3] Periplus of the Erythr. Sea : 49, 56.
[4] Ep. II. 1. 269-70.
[5] Satires, II. 4. 74.
[6] Pliny, XII. 26-8. Cf. Warmington, op. c., p. 181 3.
[7] Dios. II, 160.
[8] Apicius, I. 13.

Sandal-wood is also native to South India, and grows spontaneously in the forests of Coimbatore and Mysore. It was exported at a very early period. Some would even trace its exportation to the Hebrews and would see its name in the almug trees of the Old Testament.[9] However, this is rather doubtful. The word *valgum* found in Malabar for sandal, comes from the sanskrit *valgu,* in which we may find some resemblance to almug of the Hebrew.[10] But the real word for sandal-wood is given in the Greek as σανταλον *santalon.* This is the same root as the Tamil word சாந்து, from which is derived the sanskrit *chandana.* சாந்து is an old Tamil word referred to in Pattupāttu, for instance in Tirumurugattupadai:

நறு சாந்து அணிந்த கேழ்கிளர் மார்பின் (v. 193.)

[10] "whose chest was adorned with fragrant sandal paste of bright colour."

Some of the preceding words have already been noticed by several authors, and their Indian origin is generally acknowledged. But there are many other words, which cannot have found their way into Greek or Latin through commercial intercourse only. Some other reason must be found, which we shall discuss later on.

One of the most striking words of the kind is παλαί, *palai.* It is the same as the Tamil பழைய, old. The original word is *palai,* with the adjective form *palaios,* the feminine form *palaia.* Pronounced in the modern Greek fashion, which probably is much the same as in olden days this last feminine form palaia is the same as the Tamil பழைய, the ழ being pronounced nearly as *l* in many places of South India. In Kanarese, the ழ is already changed into *l;* this word becomes *hale,* by changing the ப into *ha,*-a frequent linguistic mutation. The word பழைய cannot have its origin in Sanskrit. It is already found in many passages of the Sangam authors. Thus we have reference to பழ சோறு, old cooked rice, in

[9] II Chron. IX, 10; II, 8. I Kings, X, 11.

[10] Cf. Warmington, op. c., p. 215.

Perumpanattuppadai (v. 224) ; பழ மொழி, old word, proverb, is the title of one of the 18 கீழ்க்கணக்கு நூல்கள். In Silappadigaram, we find பழங் கடன், a debt contracted long ago (XII, 7) ; and பழம் பிறப்பு, old birth (IX, 56), with reference to a previous life according to the doctrine of metempsychosis.

This word cannot have found its way to Greece through the commercial intercourse at the beginning of the Christian era. The word was already known to Hesiod ; and Homer refers to the kings young and old, νεοί ηδε παλαιοί, *neoi ede palaioi.*[11] It is likely to be of Dravidian origin only. Thus it is interesting to trace many words of our modern Indo-European languages to a source that has not been recognized up to now. Such words as : palaeography, palaeology, palaeontography, etc., where the word *palae* is introduced, as far as this part of the word is concerned, have to be traced ultimately to the Dravidian languages.

Another interesting word is the word for water, நீர். This root is found in all the Dravidian languages : in Kanarese, *niru ;* in Malayalam, *niru ;* in Telugu, *nillu,* etc. Now, this word is not directly found in ancient Greek, the classical form for water being υδωρ *hydor,* from which are derived many of our English words : hydrography, hydrotherapey, hydraulic, etc. But in modern Greek, the usual word for water is *nero.* νερο *nero* is not of foreign origin as such ; the languages that could have influenced modern Greek in this matter do not include this word in their vocabulary (in Turkish, water is *su ;* in Slav, *voda,* coming from the same root as *hydor,* of Indo-European origin). So, the word comes probably from some old dialect that continued to live in a few words throughout the centuries. And in fact, though we do not find the word in this form in old classical Greek, we find several words derived from it, even as early as Homer. *Nereus,* Νηρευς is spoken of already in Hesiod's Theogony.

---

[11] Odyssey, I. 395.

He was the god of the sea, and son of Poseidon, the god of the Ocean. His daughters, the *Nereids*, nymphs of the sea, are already referred to in the Iliad of Homer :

πασαι οσαι κατα βενθος αλος Νηρηΐδες ησαν

pasai osai kata benthos alos Nereides esan.

"such as were all the Nereids in the bottom of the sea." (XVIII, 88.) The word is certainly of Dravidian origin, being employed in the old Tamil Classics : in Silappadigaram, X, 79 : நீர் நாய் ; 90 : எறிநீரடைகரை etc.

The word for great, பெரிய, *peria*, can perhaps also be found in the Greek language. There are many words beginning by περ, περι, *per*, *peri*, in the Greek and Latin languages Now περι, *peri* means sometimes around ; but at times, in composite words especially, it means also above something. Thus we have περι-αγαπω, *peri-agapo*, meaning : to love above all things, a great love. This preposition must have had the same origin as the Dravidian *per*, பேர். This word has been read by Father H. Heras in the Proto-Dravidian sign ψ of Mohenjo-Daro, so similar to the Sumerian sign pronounced *gal*, having the same meaning of great.[12] I would go even further, and say that the Sumerian word *gal* itself, comes from the same root as பேர். *g* through *h* comes from *p*, as we have seen before for the word *palai ;* and *l* and *r* are a very common mutation. Thus *per* can have become *gal*, which is, I think, at the origin of μεγαλος, μεγαλα, *megalos, megala*, forms of μεγας, *megas*, meaning also great in Greek. The word is found already as such in Homer, indicating a high antiquity.[13]

Even the word τυραννος *tyrannes* seems to come from the Dravidian. திறம் in Tamil means *force, ability ;* திற

[12] Cf. Heras: "The Origin of the Sumerian Script," Journal of the University of Bombay, VII, p. 15.

[13] Cf. Odyssey: IX, 513 ; XVIII, 4 ; 382, etc.

வான், a strong man. This applies very well to the tyrannes or absolute master, all powerful, who usurps all power in a a State or City. The great word is already noticed in the Homeric Hymns,[14] dating probably from the 8th century B. C. From the Tamil is derived திறை, a tribute paid to a king: திறை கொடுக்கிறது, to pay a tribute.

Another word with very striking similitudes in both languages is παθος, *pathos,* meaning suffering, what affects the body or the soul. It has many derivatives in all the European languages, ex. in English: pathos, pathetic, pathology, etc. This word is nearly the same as the Tamil படுகிறது which means also: to suffer, to endure.

The root of அறுக்கிறது is found also in αροω, *aroō,* to cultivate, to plough. This too is an old word, found in the Odyssey and in Hesiod's works, and from it are derived αρουρα, *aroura,* ploughed land, and αροτρον, *arotron* the plough, and all cognate words: αρτηρ, *aroter,* field-worker, αροτος, *arotes,* field-work, all words already found in Hesiod and Homer.

παγος, *pagos,* the same as the Latin *pagus,* a region part of a country, comes from the root *pag,* which is found in Tamil in words like பங்கு, பகுதி, பகிர், etc., indicating a portion or division of something.

θεω, *theō,* comes from the same root as ஓடுகிறது, and has the same meaning: to run. The same root is found in θυελλα, *thuella* a storm, and even a derivative is found in θυμος, *thymes* soul, spirit, the root of all similar words being θυ, thy. All these words are found in the oldest extant literature of both languages.

Perhaps it will look rather bold to advance the word γυνη, *gunē,* meaning woman, female, as of Dravidian origin too. This word has been introduced into English in words

---

[14] Edit. A. Gemoll: 7, 5. Cf. also Pindar, Pyth. II, 159, etc.

such as: gynaeceum, gynaecology, gynarchy, etc. Now the γ, *g*, in modern Greek is pronounced somewhat like *h*. We have here the same process as in Kanarese : the *h* has come from an original *p*. So it is not difficult after all to trace γυνη, *gunê* to the kanarese *hennu*, and from it to the Tamil பெண், having th same significance woman, female. The Tamil word is found without any modification in the old Sangam works, such as Silappadigaram, VII, 13. 4.
In Maduraikkanji we have :

பெண் மகிழ் வுற்ற பிணை நோக்கு மகளிர் (v. 555.).

" the young ladies with deer-like eyes and full of joy."
And earlier, the word is found in Tholkappiam : [15]

பெண்மை, indicating the feminine gender.

ஆண்மை, the masculine gender.

The Greek form is also very old, being found in the Iliad and Odyssey, ex. :

'Ως δε γυνη κλαίησι φίλον ποσίν αμφί πεσουσα

Os de gune klaiesi philon posin amphipesousa.

" As a woman wails falling at the feet of her beloved " (who is dead).[16]

The counterpart of this word is ανηρ *anêr*, man, male, and from it comes alsoανθρωπος,*anthropos*, which have given us such English words as: anthropology, androgyn, etc. *Anthropos* means also *man, human being*, by composition to the gods. Both these words have the same root : *ān*. They cannot come, as some say, from the Sanskrit *nar*, which has sometimes also the meaning of man. But in Tamil, the word is found with its full meaning : ஆண், meaning male, as well

---

[15] Solladigaram, 4.

[16] Odyssey : VIII, 523. Cf. also Iliad : VI, 160 ; VIII, 57, etc.

as in the Greek word. In the previous paragraph, I have already referred to this word in the *Tholkappiam.* In the Greek too, both the words are used by Homer : πατηρ ανδρων, *patêr andron,* father of men (passim) ; ανηρ βασιλευς, basileus, a king (passim).[17]

As words of relationship, we have also παίς, *paîs,* child, boy or girl. The same root is found in the Tamil word பையன் boy, In Kanarese, the *p* becomes *h* as usual ; but *huduga,* boy, has preserved the *d* which is found also in the Greek in in the oblique cases : genitive, παιδος, *paidos* ; dative *paidi,* from which is derived the modern form παιδι, *paidi,* boy. These words too are very old in both languages. In the Iliad, we find it already :

παιδα δ'εμοι λυσαι

paida d'emoi lusai

" give me back my child." (I. 20). etc.

I shall trace one more similitude from the Greek to the Dravidian languages : that is, the word for *milk.* In Greek, it is γαλα, *gāla,* which has given us the English words : galaxy, galactometer. Now, with the permutation of letters shown already in γυνη, *gunê* we find easily the corresponding kanarese word : *hālu* (the *g* Greek is the same as *h* in many words). The kanarese is derived from the Tamil பால், having the same signification. These words are found also in the oldest extant literature of both languages : in the Greek, Homer used γαλα , *gāla,* in the Iliad (IV, 434) and Odyssey (IV, 88, etc.) ; in Tamil, it is fund in the Sangam period, for instance in the *Perumpanatupadai* (v. 168.) :

பசுந்தினை மூரல் பாலொடும் பெறுகுவிர்

" *you will receive fresh tinei rice with milk* " ;

and in the *Tholkappiam,* Solladigaram, 211 :

பாலறி மரபி . . . .*etc.*

[17] For *Anthropos,* cf. Iliad : V, 442 ; IX, 134 ; XVI, 263, etc.

This list of Tamil loan words is by no means exhaustive. Many others could be found if we searched for them. It would be difficult to argue that so many Dravidian words have found their way into Greek through commercial intercourse only. Words like : milk, woman, child, man, old, hand (*χειρ, cheir*=கை), etc., are of too common use in all languages to have been introduced into Greek from another foreign language. Moreover, as we have seen before, all these words are so ancient in Tamil as well as in Greek, that they seem original in both languages.

How may we account for these similarities? In my opinion, there is only one explanation. It does not come through commercial contact, but through daily contact with another population, whose language they amalgamated partly into their own. Before the invasion of Greece by the Aryans, there existed in Greece and other countries around the Mediterranean Sea, a race or several races whose language remnants still persist after so many centuries of Greek Culture. Just as we have in English many words of Celtic origin, though the English language itself is mostly of Saxon and Latin extraction, in the same manner, these old words remained in the Greek language as relics of those people who first inhabited Greece and were later subjugated by the Aryans. The Aryans — Achaeans, Dorians, and other races — imported their language, which has developed into Classical Greek, so similar in its roots and fundamental grammar to Sanskrit and Latin. Still, the conquered people could not relinquish all their traditions and languages, and it is these faint traces of their language that we have tried to find. Perhaps the Pelasgians were the people who spoke it ; perhaps it came through the Minoans or the Etruscans. At any rate, I have no doubt about their ultimate Dravidian origin. Later on, I propose to show that, even historically, this fact of a Dravidian settlement along the Mediterranean shores is becoming more and more probable and is admitted nowadays by many scholars.

Translations from Tayumanaver

My heart hath harder grown

Even a wayside stone may sometimes soften,
After heavy rain, but, alas ! my heart hath harder grown
Brahma, O mighty one, has Thou no power,
To convert this sinful soul that seeks not to atone ?
What Thou decreest is law, why need I argue more ?
Then, Lord, send Thy rain on my heart so hard and sore,
That I might prepare the ground for Thy grace to grow.
Thou art my mother, canst Thou cast away Thy naughty son,
Who hast but Thee and Thy loving care alone ?
If I speak not truth, O Lord, I would soon become
Heirless of grace sunk in the depths of sins ever to groan
In words there is no profit, teach me to sit still,
My God, my all, my eternal light ever to do Thy will.

Pride of Learning

The unlearned ones, they are the really good,
The ignorance of all my learning, my sole pride,
My senseless actions, how well shall I describe ?
Wisdom of God is man's concern when some affirm,
I say good actions alone to salvation lead,
This when some ponder deep and discern
I would recommend to them the former creed.
At discussions when a scholar in Sanskrit I meet,
To him I would quote a Tamil verse or two
When arguments with Tamil scholars ensue
I would then with Sanskrit slogans greet.
O Lord, who art beyond dissensions all still
Will hypocrisy ever lead me to attain Thy will ?

Translated by
DONALD KANAGARATNAM

Somasunthera Pulavar of Navaliyur, Jaffna

K. S. ARULNANDHY, M. Sc. (Lond.)

THE historic peninsula of Yarlparnam (Jaffna), studded with groves of the hardy yet majestic palmyrah palm, which symbolizes the perseverance, industry, uprightness, hospitality and sturdy independence of the Tamils who inhabit it, lies in the extreme north of the still more historic island of Lanka (Ceylon) crowning her as it were. Notwithstanding its geographical and political separation from the Tamil-speaking territories of Southern India, its essential character of being an integral part of Tamilagam linguistically and culturally has not materially changed even to this day. When exactly the Tamils first came to the peninsula from their mother-land and inhabited it is obscure. But there seems to be no doubt that they had arrived in waves at different periods from very early times, sometimes as adventurous conquerors and at other times as peaceful settlers in quest of a new home, and that this periodic immigration ceased not long before the advent of the Portuguese early in the sixteenth century. However, the Tamil settlers of Yarlparnam and their descendants have throughout maintained a close contact with their mother country only about thirty miles distant across the strait that separates them. To this continuous intercourse with the main stock and to the firm foundation of Tamilian culture deeply rooted in the ancient and highly advanced Dravidian civilization has to be attributed the absence of structural or fundamental changes in the language, religion, traditions habits, and cus-

---

K. S. Arulnandhy is Lecturer, Department of Education, University of Ceylon.

toms, and in the unique culture comprising all these, in spite of the aggressive and alienating influence of four and a half centuries of foreign domination. No doubt, many changes, more formal than real for by far the most part, have been wrought by this foreign influence in the life of the people, but they have not, in general, penetrated deep enough to reach the foundations and strike at the roots of Tamilian culture and cause it to wither away giving rise to another, a new one, not even among those relatively few people who had changed their religion. There is yet a significant minority among the rural population in particular whose deviation if any from the characteristic Tamilian way of living and thinking, either in form or in content, is hardly discernible. Somasunthera Pulavar, who is our theme, is an exalted example of this wonderful survival of Tamilian culture through all the vicissitudes of the Tamils in their adopted home, Yarlparnam.

Somasunthera Pulavar was born on the 6th of October, 1876, in Navaliyur in the peninsula of Yarlparnam, and he passed away in his seventy-seventh year on the 10th of July, 1953. His known ancestry goes as far back as four centuries to Vanniasegara Mudaliyar, a staunch Saivite who had migrated from the Vanni District skirting Yarlparnam on the south, and settled at Navaliyur. Throughout the four centturies that followed, conformity to the ethics and practices of the orthodox Saiva Sidhanta Religion and the Tamil culture that is intertwined with it characterized the pattern of life of his ancestors. His own father, Arumaiyinar Kadirgamar, was not only ardently devoted to his ancestral religion but also well versed in the two great Tamil epics, the *Mahabaratham* of Villiputhurar and Kachiappar's *Kanthapuranam*, and in music and drama. He was thus a fortunate heir to the extremely rare combination of the three distinct privileges of superior heredity, primogeniture, and a dignified and noble home environment presided over by a religious father versed in Muthamil (Language & Literature, Music and Drama). This was not all. He also had in his mother, *Ilakkumipillai*, an embodiment of the noble qualities of piety and hospitality characteristic of the best Tamilian Saivite homes, a fitting

partner to the father in providing their first born son with an early environment and nurture that must certainly have been highly conducive and stimulating to the unfolding of his exceptional qualities, which, no doubt, he had inherited from his illustrious stock. Perhaps, it was fortunate for Tamilagam that poverty was also his lot, a condition that more or less persisted side by side with chronic physical ailments for many years. For, these that might have degraded and tarnished another man served but to sharpen his intellect and purify his life like the furnace that converts coarse ore of iron into hard shining steel. His own words portray this reaction of his in the following stanza :

இல்லாமை யால்வந்த துயரினால் மிகநொந்
திரகத்து ணிந்துமானம்
ஏகாது பின்றள்ள வாற்றாமை முன்றள்ள
விடையூச லாடியாடிப்
பல்லாயி ரந்தரங் காட்டியும் நாவினாற்
பயிலாத மொழிபயின்றும்
பணியாத பேரைப் பணிந்துமுன் திறவாத
படலைபல பலதிறந்தும்
பொல்லாத வஞ்சரைப் பாடியும் புகல்கின்ற
பொய்மைமொழி செவிமடுத்தும்
போற்றுமுன் பெருமைபறி போகவிட் டென்மனம்
புண்பட்ட வாறுபோதும்
செல்லாத செல்வமுந் திருவடிச் சேவையுஞ்
சிறியெனுக் கருளுகண்டாய்
தென்பொதிய மலையிலுறை கும்பமுனி மடியில்வளர்
செந்தமிழ்க் குலதெய்வமே.

"*With great pain of mind, borne of poverty, did I make bold to appeal for help ; with pride pushing me back, helplessness pushing me on, and oscillating between the two, a thousand times did I my teeth uncover, learn to use language my tongue had not learnt to speak, beseech those whom I had not beseeched, opened many a gate I had not opened, and sing in praise of wicked men and fill my ears with their false words having lost my pride even before I began to praise them ; enough that I have*

suffered so much; graciously confer upon this insignificant individual, O exalted Goddess of Senthamil, who groweth on the lap of the pitcher-born Rishi (Agasthiyar) resident in the Pothiya Hills of the South, riches that vanish not and service unto the divine feet."

As the eldest son of the family, separated from his next younger brother by over three years, he would have become deeply introverted had it not been for his early intimate contact with children of related families of the immediate neighbourhood, a contact so natural and inevitable in the humble circumstances and surroundings of healthy rural life. This early extroversion thus imparted to his personality, essentially introverted by virtue of his position in the family, was enhanced by the advent of his next younger brother, followed by another brother and a sister, with the result that he developed a very happy combination of some of the best qualities of both the extrovert and the introvert. His introverted nature is manifest in the highly imaginative character of his literary outpourings in Tamil verse, in the remarkable absence of desire for publicity, and in the sustained and intense devotion to his favourite deity, Murugan, and to the Goddess of Tamil. His inner life, surging with poetic imagination and sanctified by religious zeal, could not be subdued in any degree in either respect even by the unfortunate physical ailment, Asthma, which afflicted him for many years to the end of his life. On the other hand, it only made him turn more and more inwards, search within and sing profusely in praise of and in appeal to Murugan, Namahal, and other Hindu Deities. The ten stanzas entitled Arulpathu and addressed to Namahal, for instance, are a clear evidence of the conflict of his spirit and flesh and the assertion of the former amidst the sufferings of the latter. The last of these stanzas is -

ஒருகோடி பெரும்பாவ முணராது புரிந்தேன்
ஓயாத சிற்றின்பத் துழன்றுழன்று திரிந்தேன்
உருகோடு மெய்யன்பா லுன்பாதம் பணியா
வுன்மத்த னெனையாளத் திருவுள்ள மிரங்கி

அருகோடி வந்தெடுத்து மடிமீதி லிருத்தி
அறிவமுக நிறையவளித் தரும்பிணிகள் மாற்றித்
திருகோட மிடிபோடத் தீயவினை யோடச்
செய்யதமிழ்ப் பெருமாட்டி திருவருள் செய்குதியே.

"O lovable Mother Tamil! Millions of time have I gravely sinned through ignorance; into ceaseless sensuous pleasure have I gone on plunging over and over again; to worship thy feet with consuming true love have I, this senseless fool, failed; have mercy on me that I may be saved and hasten unto me; lift me and seat me on thy lap; feed me with the ambrosia of knowledge in plenty and heal me of my immedicable diseases; and on me shed thy Divine Grace that wickedness; poverty and evil may all vanish."

Even when this supplicatory stanza, born of his biform distress, was taking shape within, he turned the searchlight of his devout intellect inwards. He was, perhaps, gasping for breath at that moment and yet his first thought was that he should pray not for relief from physical suffering but for the plenitude of knowledge, enlightenment. This characteristic he shared in common with the majority of the Muse-inspired saints of Tamilagam, of whom the two Saivite saints, Thayumanavar and Paddinathupillaiyar are illustrious examples. These saints are all remembered primarily for their intense piety and ruthless detachment from things worldly and only secondarily for their poetic genius, for they had renounced the world and had been consumed by the one desire to attain eternal bliss. Whereas, Somasunthera Pulavar lived the life of a householder, a loving partner to his equally devoted wife, a fond and understanding father, a warm and affectionate brother, a great teacher, and a friend and counsellor to one and all, who came into close contact with him, irrespective of caste, creed or status. He thus reminds us also of that saintly poet, Thiruvalluvar. His entry into matrimony, however, was not of his own seeking. Intent as he was on a life of devotion to God and dedication to Mother Tamil, wedded state seemed to him a hindrance to the pursuit of his twofold

objective. Yet, impelled by his deep-seated affection and reverence to his parents and Guru, he yielded to their wish and, in his twenty-eighth year, married a maternal first cousin, Sinnammaiyar. This Guru, known as Subramania Swami, had come about eight years earlier all the way from Bangalore to the poet's village in answer as if it were to his silent prayers for guidance and strength to pursue his cherished ideals. The extraordinary spiritual influence then exerted on him by the Swami was profound and lasting, and it was a source of great strength and inspiration ever afterwards in his pursuit of the lofty goals early engendered in his heart. He had no cause to regret his decision to surrender his bachelorhood, for he certainly led a happy life with his devoted wife in the midst of a happy family of three sons and two daughters. Further, he has thus raised a new generation of talented and cultured individuals, which has already made a mark in the field of Tamil scholarship among other things. This is no less a gift of his to the Tamil Nadu than his voluminous poetic creation, which first became manifest in his fifteenth year and, gradually gathering momentum with growing maturity, reached great heights indeed and ceased only when his frail body was no longer a fit abode for his noble and vigorous soul, longing, in accord with his belief in re-incarnation, for a fitter vehicle to continue his already far advanced journey to the ultimate goal of realization of the Supreme Bliss.

His extrovert tendencies were equally manifest in his social living and poetic utterances. In his introduction to Namahal Puhal Malai, that fascinating work, "resplendent with captivating melodies, novel and apt similies and metaphors, copious yet appropriate allusions to Hindu Mythology and ancient history of the Tamil land, familiar, homely and at the same time elegant words and phrases, and above all a rich and sustained variety of all these and yet other beauties exquisitely combined as can only be combined by a poet and a scholar both in one, to produce a Castalian garland of variegated stanzaic flowers," to quote our own words from the foreword, he says

வம்மின் புலவீர் ! வம்மின் புலவீர் !
இம்மையும் மறுமையு நன்மை பயந்து
தொன்மையும் புதுமையு மென்மையுந் தெய்வத்
தன்மையு நிரம்பி யெழுமையுந் தொடர்ந்து
யாழினுங் குழலினும் பாலினுந் தேனினுங்
காணினுங் கேட்பினுங் கருதினு மினிக்கும்
அமிழ்துறழ் தலைமைத் தமிழ்மொழி யுணர்ந்த
மெய்நெறிப் புலவீர் வம்மினெல்லீரும்,
அந்தமு நடுவு மாதியுந் தெரியாச்
செந்தமிழ் செல்வியைப் போற்றுதும் யாமெலாம்.

*Come o Bards, Come ! Virtuous Bards steeped in ambrosia-impregnated, peerless Tamil that begets goodness here and hereafter, is saturated with antiquity, modernity, tenderness and divinity, follows us through the sevenfold incarnation, delights us more than the *yarl and the flute, more than milk and honey, and when seen or heard or contemplated ! Come ye all that we may sing the praises of the Goddess of Senthamil !*

* *Yarl* : a sweet and melodious stringed musical instrument of ancient origin in the Tamil land.

This, his clarion call to all virtuous bards of Tamilagam inviting them to share with him the joy of devotion to Tamil, is an unwitting revelation of his admirable social attitude, unmistakably illustrated in abundance throughout his life by his deep concern for the well being and happiness of others. While he was yet in his teens, he organised and conducted a vigorous society of young men for the purpose of promoting the study and practice of the Saiva religion, and followed it up with the publication of a paper with the same objective, which he named Saiva Paliya Sampothini. He delighted in teaching religion and Tamil, and his home was a veritable free academy where many a young man sat at his feet and drank freely of the fountain of his culture and scholarship, for he neither expected nor received any remuneration. Nay, he even acted the host not infrequently regardless of the repurcussions on his meagre resources. His choice of the

teaching profession, which he adorned for forty years till he reached the age of retirement, was deliberate. With the knowledge of English he had acquired he could have secured with little or no effort at that time a far more remunerative and secure employment, but his social concern and love of children would not permit him even to think of an alternative to teaching as his life's career. Not only did he nurture with loving tenderness and rare understanding the school children entrusted to his care, but also had a special place reserved in his benign heart for all children of Tamilagam, even for those yet unborn as well. The collection of his songs for the young, சிறுவர் செந்தமிழ், recently published in book form, is an eloquent, tangible index of this. It is indeed a work of rare excellence which bespeaks his insight into the often misread young mind and his extraordinary sense of rhythm and melody. His nature and culture naturally revolted against the social evil of animal sacrifice that is yet perpetrated in the name of misconceived Saivaism by ignorant people, whose obduracy made him turn to the young mind and sow in it the seeds of reform by appealing to its emotions. The pathos of the twenty-eight rhyming couplets of the familiar Tamil dirge form, which the poet, with this end in view, has put into the mouth of a mother goat lamenting the death of her beloved, majestic son in the prime of his life, is heart-rending indeed in an unusually high degree. The words and the sentiments they express have been so very aptly chosen that their charm is unique and inimitable. If they are sung as they should be in the appropriate tune, is there a man, woman or child so hard-hearted and impervious as to resist the copious flow of tender emotions which they are bound to evoke? The essential quality of these couplets, their highly emotive quintessence, eludes intellectual grasp, and it is, for this reason, extremely difficult, nay almost impossible, to convey in another language anything but a faint approximation to the feelings which characterize them in the original. Yet a translation of eight of them is herein attempted for what it is worth.

1. ஆசை மகனேயென் அன்பான கண்மணியே
நேசத் துரையே நெடும்பயணம் போனாயோ.

O my darling son, dear pupil of my eye, my affectionate lord, gone hast thou on a long, long journey!

2. நேராத கோவிலெல்லாம் நேர்ந்து தவமிருந்தே
ஆராத காதலுடன் ஐயோநான் பெற்றெடுத்தேன்.

With unabating love, alas, did I beget thee having longed for thy advent in prayer and fasting in many a temple!

3. துள்ளு நடையழகுஞ் சோதி முகத்தழகுங்
கொள்ளுஞ் செவியழகுங் கோமளமே காண்பதெப்போ.

When, Oh, when again, will I be able, O my young beauty, to feast my eyes with the splendour of thy springy gait, the radiance of thy shining face, and the grace thy ears assume?

4 யாழுங் குழலுமென மின்பக் குதலைமொழி
நாளும் பொழுதுமினி நான்கேட்ப தெந்நாளோ.

When, Oh, when, will I be able to hear, as I used to day in and day out, thy childish chatter, sweet as the yarl and the flute?

5. கிம்புரிப் பூணணிந்து கிண்கிணிப்பொற் றூர்சூட்டி
வம்ப ரலங்கரிக்கப் பார்த்து மகிழ்ந்தேனே.

Happy was I when I saw the treacherous decorate thee with bells and festoons on thy legs.

6. வன்னப்பொற் றேரேறி மாப்பிளைபோற் சென்றாயே
இன்னும் வரக்காணேன் எங்குற்றாய் எங்குற்றாய்.

Where, Oh, where, hast thou gone? I beheld thee go riding on a pretty golden chariot like a bridegroom, and thou hast not returned yet!

7. பெண்ணை மணந்தெனது பிள்ளைவரு வானென்றே
எண்ணி யிருந்துநா னேமாந்து போனெனெடா.

Methought my child would wed a woman and return, but deceived have I been, Oh my son!

8. ஓங்கிய கத்தி விழும்போ துடல் நடுங்க
ஏங்கி யென்னை நினைந்தென் னம்மாவோ வென்றாயோ.

When the raised knife descended and thy body quivered, didst thou quail and, remembering me, cry "Oh, my mother dear"?

Nature also had a great fascination for our poet, but its appeal was often more subjective than objective in the sense that his perception of the beauty, majesty, dignity and grace in Nature associatively synchronized with the appreciation of like qualities in men. This again is a manifestation of the extroverted aspect of his personality, permanently disposed to assess the worth of the individual as a component of society, and take delight in recognizing virtues while condemning the opposite. In his work on Nature's Gifts to Lanka and the Beauty of the Palmyrah Palm (*இலங்கை வளமும் தால விலாசமும்*) he sees —

1. *the magnanimity of the Tamil King Ellalan, in the thirsty rain clouds which descend to drink of the Indian Ocean and in carded cotton ;*

எஃகிய பஞ்சினைப் போலத் — தமிழ்
எல்லாள மன்ன னிருதயம் போல
வெஃகிய வெண்முகிற் கூட்டம் — இந்து
வெண்டிரை மேயவெ ழுந்திடு மன்றே

2. *the generosity of the benevolent who exact what they can from the miserly rich and distribute it among the poor, in the same clouds which drink deep of the saline ocean, and, combining and rolling, ascend ;*

ஈயாத வற்சரின் வெளவி — நல்ல
இரவலர்க் கீகின்ற புரவலர் போல
ஓயா வுவர்க்கட லள்ளி — மிக
வுண்டு திரண்டு புரண்டெழு மேகம்.

3. *the ignorance of the illiterate and the jealous, in the intense darkness of the Kaduganawa Pass, and in the dark moistureladen clouds, which, in lightening mock at the sun, and, in thunder, challenge him;*

கல்லா தவர்மனம் போல — அன்றிக்
கடுகணைக் குவைவரு கனையிருள் போல
அல்லா தழுக்காறு கொண்டோர் — மனம்
ஆமென வேயிருண் டங்குசூழ் கொண்டே
செங்கதி ரோன்றனை யொள்ளி — நின்று
சிரிப்பது போல விடையிடை மின்னி
அங்கவ ரோடறை கூவி — எதிர்த்
தார்ப்பது போல விடித்து முழங்கும்.

4. *the Grace with which Buddha, the great conqueror of all desires and hatreds, preached to the wide world the knowledge he had gained in the course of six years of meditation under the bo-tree, in the river that takes its rise in the Adam's peak ;*

அரசு நீழலிற் புத்த மாமுனி
ஆறு வற்சரம் பெற்ற யோகினைப்
பரவு பாரினுக் கருளு மாறுபோற்
பாத பங்கயத் தருவி பாயுமே.

5. *the righteousness of the Sermon on the Mount of Jesus, the Enlightened One, in the river which flows from Pedrutalagala hills, having received the bounty of the great clouds ;*

ஏசு வென்றிடும் ஞான பண்டிதன்
ஏறி மாமலைக் கூறு நீதிபோற்
பேசு மாமுகில் சொரிய வாங்கியே
பேது ருமலை யருவி பாயுமே.

6. *the censorial oratory of Arumuga Navalar of Nallur employed by him to propagate the knowledge of Saivaism he had imbibed from Tamil Religious Literature, in the flow of the river of the Kataragama hills ;*

உண்ட செந்தமிழ்ச் சைவ நூலமு
தோங்க நல்லைவந் தருளு நாவலன்
கண்ட னப்பிர சங்க மாமெனக்
கதிரை மாமலை யருவி காலுமே.

7. *the seven different thermal degrees of the seven hot springs of Kaniyai, situated in jungle surroundings in the outskirts of Trincomalie, in the minds of (1) the damsel separated from her lover, (2) the bard who sings in praise and receives no boon, (3) one who is insulted and threatened with harm, (4) one who regrets a wrong he had done, (5) the helpless one who is denied justice, (6) the chaste woman whose chastity has been violated, and (7) the green-eyed monster ;*

காதலனைப் பிரிந்தவளின் மனம்போல ஒன்று
கவிபாடிப் பரிசுபெறான் மறம்போல ஒன்று
தீதுபழி கேட்டவன்தன் மனம்போல ஒன்று
செய்தபிழைக் கழுங்குமவன் மனம்போல ஒன்று
நீதிபெறா வேழைதுயர் மனம்போல ஒன்று
நிறைப்ழித்த கற்புடையாள் மனம்போல ஒன்று
காதுமழுக் காறுடையான் மனம்போல ஒன்று
கன்லேறு மெழுநீர்கள் உண்டுகன்னி யாயில்;

8. *the protection, which the crowned monarch affords his realm with drawn sword of steel, in the palmyrah palm, which, wielding the sword-like stalk of its leaf, destroys poverty and thus protects humanity.*

உருக்குவா ளேந்திப் பகைசெற்றுலகினை
யோம்பு மணிமுடி மன்னவன்போற்
கருக்குவா ளேந்திக் கலியை யழித்திந்தக்
காசினி யைக் காக்கும் ஞானப்பெண்ணே.

Somasunthera Pulavar's interests extended to other fields as well. Astrology, palmistry, mantric literature, medicine and culinary art also attracted him, and he made a special study of them all not because he desired to become a practitioner of any one of them but because his broad-based intellect

demanded for its food as great a variety of knowledge as he could gather. Further these branches of oriental learning, which play not a small part, though not as of yore, in the life of the Tamils, especially the Saivites, enriched his service to the society to which he belonged and contributed not a little to the happiness of its members. This was not all. He was also a dramatist who had written plays and, besides directing their production on the stage, himself acted in some of them. A religious scholar that he was, he avidly devoured books on Saiva Sidhanta Religion and Philosophy. His desire that others also should experience the happiness he thus derived had possessed him so much that, from his death-bed a week before he breathed his last, he regretfully remarked, "Who will, after I am gone, render Gnanamirtham (a Saiva Sidhanta verse work) in the form lessons in sweet and simple prose, and Perungkathai (the story of Uthaiyanan) in the form of a drama ? ", and added that he would be born again in Tamilagam to perfom these two services.

The quantity of Somasunthera Pulavar's literary productions is no less impressive than its quality. Apart from over a thousand isolated verses he had composed on almost as many occasions as they arose, there are to his credit over twenty-five works in verse and a few in prose, many of which are yet in manuscript form awaiting publication. Poet he was, but he was also a man of action. He dreamt dreams and saw visions as all poets do, but, unlike those poets who, for the most part, rest content with indulging in their dreams and visions in the cloister of their own mental life, he recorded most of them for the benefit of contemporary society and posterity in elegant and captivating linguistic form, be it verse or prose. Still more impressive are his character and ideals. At the present time, when materialism and sensualism are spreading much faster than most people seem to realise, underneath a superficial layer of formal religion or displacing religion altogether, personalities such as that of Somasunthera Pulavar stand as beacons illumining forgotten ideals and guiding us towards them. The more important of his social ideals, which he deligently and sincerely pursued and were evident to all who

had the privilege of knowing him intimately were propagation of Tamilian culture and way of living, hospitality, forgiveness and tolerance. He was thus a brilliant poet, an unobtrusive social reformer, a great teacher, and an ardent devotee, all in one, whose inner beauty was magnificently reflected in his lustrous face, gracious eyes, graceful deportment, and charming speech. HE WAS GREAT.

The Tragedy of Ahalya

(*A study in Kamba Ramayanam*)

BY

E. T. RAJESWARI, M. A., L. T.

A

IN THE *Ramayana* the tragedy of Ahalya is narrated after the tragedy of Tataka. The greatness of Tataka was sufficiently brought out in the previous essay to justify the name tragedy as applied to her fall. The tragedy of Ahalya, however, may not be a correct description of the story of Ahalya ; for after her fall she is restored to her husband and lord and to a happy and righteous life. The story, has thus, to be ranked along with comedies because of this happy resolution of the tragic complications. But all the same in essence it is a tragedy, a greater tragedy than the story of Cleopatra, the restoration part of the story coming in here only as a dramatic elaboration of the conception of poetic justice. This elaboration and concrete realisation of the idea, it is true, becomes important in the story of Rama as revealing his character and from this point of view, it is the comedy that has to be emphasised. But as a poetic vision and a dramatisation of problems of life it is more revealing if it is studied as a tragedy.

The main object of our study is the characteristic feature of Kamban's art as best illustrated by his free treatment of the minor episodes of *Ramayana* especially these dealings with the lives of the women. Restricting thus our study to women characters, we pass over the story of the churning of the ocean and the penance of Bhagirata, both emphasising the inevitable nemesis that follows power intoxication and the unfailing and undreamt of victory of

spiritual effort. Kamban, however, connects the story of Tataka with that of Ahalya as revelations of Rama's character *Kai Vannam anku-K-Kanten Kal Vannam inku-K-Kanten.* "I saw there the characteristic feature of your arms I see here the characteristic feature of your feet" thus speaks Kamban's Visvamitra.

Akalikai is the Tamilised form of the word Ahalya. Halya is related to the English word ugly and means an ugly one; 'a' is the remnant of the negative particle 'ha'. Ahalya is the opposite of ugliness — the beautiful — the most beautiful woman created by Brahma. Gautama is the seer who won her. Indra, the King of the Heavens, corrupts her. Ahalya receives the curse and after enduring this punishment comes back as the purified chaste and worshipful wife. Ahalya is one of the seven chaste women of Indian tradition.

This story of Ahalya represents the ever recurring theme of many stories all the world over. It reminds us of a modern divorce suit filed by an aggrieved husband against his false wife. To emphasise the modernity of the theme, we may continue to speak in this legal jargon where Gautama will be the Petitioner, Ahalya the Respondent and Indra the Correspondent. Fortunately there is no denial of the offence but a patient and willing endurance of the punishment pronounced not by a Court but by the husband. The punishment thus endured cease to be mere enforcement of political sovereignty and social peace but rises to the level of moral expiation, mental purification and spiritual conversion. Therefore, the story ends in the reunion of the old couple.

One is naturally curious to know how this most ancient and the most modern theme —an archetype according to Jung— is handled by Kamban walking in the footsteps of his illustrious predecessor Valmiki, the Father of Indian Epics, as contrasted with the varied treatments which this story has received at the hands of other epic poets of India.

B

The story of Ahalya occupies the Forty eighth and Forty ninth chapters in Valmiki's Balakanta. After Tataka's demise, the sacrifice is duly performed by Visvámitra. The Rishi takes the princes Rama and Lakshmana through the road leading to Mithila of Janaka, probably with a view to bring about the marriage of Rama with Sita.

Visvamitra along with the princes enters the outskirts of Mithila. Rama notices an old uninhabited, but a beautiful ashrama or grave and he is naturally curious to know from his guide and philosopher why it lies so deserted. Viswamitra as a good and seasoned teacher well versed in the art of story tellings begins to narrate the story of the curse that befell Ahalya.

Here lived in olden days the great Rishi Gautama —thus narrates Visvamitra—along with his wife Ahalya. One day, Indra, the King of Heavens, mad after her beauty, coming to know of the absence of Gautama from home, entered the Ashrama in the very form of Gautama, to allay all fears of suspicion. But to Ahalya he revealed his identity and confessed his love to her. Knowing that it was the Lord of the Thousand eyes, she lost herself in the thought of being happy with the very King of the Heavens and exclaimed in joy to him "From my heart of hearts I feel I am fortunate" and Indra spent a happy time with her. While he was hurriedly making his exit, he saw entering Gautama that great fire of Tapas. Indra's face turned white with fright and the Rishi seeing the King of Heavens in the garb of a Seer understood the situation and cursed Indra to become fruitless. Then came the turn of Ahalya "You lie here for many thousands of years living on air alone without any more food, burning yourself away on a bed of ashes, invisible to all beings. You will become pure and whole when Rama, son of Dasaratha enters this cruel forest. When you welcome him, all your blots would be removed. You will then assume your old form and come back to me" — thus was pronounced the curse on Ahalya by Gautama. The last sentence reveals that the

volcano of tapas has become transferred into an ocean of mercy, and love which reminds us that in this curse he is himself laying a curse on himself of separation from her and isolation in tapas in the fond hope of living a happy life with a purified and chaste wife.

In the next chapter Visvamitra explains how aided by Devas in whose cause Indra pretended to have suffered this ignominy — for according to him his was an attempt at cursing the tapas of Gautama consuming them and the world away — he overcame his curse with the help of a scape goat of a sheep. There stops the narration and the drama of Ramayana proceeds.

At the request of Visvamitra Rama enters the Ashrama, which the prince has noticed as being desolate and where Ahalya has been burning away all these years. As soon as Rama steps in she becomes visible and the curse comes to an end. Memory returns to her and she remembers the last words of Gautama. She recognises in the prince her promised saviour and she welcomes Rama as the guest in chief showering on him all hospitality. Thus purified she is taken away by Gautama. Thus ends the story of Ahalya in Valmiki's Ramayana.

C

Valmiki is great as a story teller even in narrating this story. Here also Visvamitra shines as a great teacher giving the story only when his students are interested in asking him to explain a situation. The remarks we had made with reference to the narration of the story of Tataka are equally applicable to this narration.

In this version of the story it is the man Indra, who kindles the fire of sin in the heart of the innocent woman. But Ahalya intoxicated by the mere sight of Royalty forgets everything else. It is their misfortune that the husband comes in before Indra walks out of Ahalya's house. Perhaps the Rishi Gautama is also like others a victim to jealousy

but his indignation is a righteous one and rises thanks to his spiritual development to the impartial level of Dharma. Like Dharma after restoring the disturbed equilibrium he relents; for he is speaking of taking back Ahalya.

Both Ahalya and Indra have erred consciously. Indra's excuse is that Gautama is upsetting the natural order of things by his excessive tapas, and that if he had not disturbed Gautama's victories towards greater and greater volcanic tapas there would have been room for nothing else in this world. The seductive act of Indra has certainly put an end to the spiritual and mental peace and equanimity of Gautama, who is made thus to realise that there is something more to be cared after in this world than himself and his tapas which under the circumstances appears more like self aggrandisement; it rudely reminds him that there is a world with his own wife as its centre to be saved. This is indeed a sad commentary on the powers of his tapas which could not influence to any extent whatever even the most wonderful creation of Brahma — Ahalya and raise that unexcelled physical beauty with which he has been blessed to his own heights of moral beauty. The curse he utters is the creaking crash of this spiritual personality.

Ahalya as the name itself implies is the very embodiment of feminine beauty which Gautama, the supreme embodiment of tapas aspired for along with Indra the supreme embodiment of power and wealth. But mere physical beauty seems to resonate only to the specific tune of the drum of power and wealth rather than to the music of the harp of virtue, because this harp has not been set to vibrate in unison with the lyre of the feminine heart of beauty. Human greatness however is something more than mere physical beauty and the latter unaided by a moral companion for life, falls naturally as a prey to the glamour of pomp and power. But this mad race after material mirage of seeming pleasure soon becomes sick

of its own imaginary surfeit especially when it meets with an obstruction. Obstruction egged on Tataka to run the race with redoubled but diabolical vigour. Here however, thanks to the childish simplicity of Ahalya who has not known the world, it has inspired in her a repentence. Welcoming the appropriate curse and punishment, she stands converted in the end as the worthy wife of a great sage not only as a mere embodiment of physical beauty but also as a moral beauty at the very moment when the perfect Man, Rama, comes as it were to effect this final divine transformation by his very presence like gold purified and sublimated, after she had gone through the consuming fire of tapas on a bed of ashes.

D

Like all old stories this has become a parable of the triangle of forces of Beauty, Power, Tapas. Some have taken Ahalya to represent Art the Beautiful. Though it may be wedded to morality, when the union is not complete but only an outward formality, art deteriorates and is seduced in to a bedmate of all varieties of power. Is this not what happened to our arts — dancing, music and poetry all developing as temple arts ? Have they not been identified with public women ? What was the poetry of the Palayagars or chieftains but a poetry of debauchery ? This fall is repeated often in the course of history. In the age of Alvars and Nayanmars great authors like Tiruttakka Tevar identified these arts with sexual passion speaking of the wealth and greatness of Vina or lyre as Kama or lust. After this suffering and neglect the art came thanks to these Saints to be truly wedded to morality and spirituality, by becoming one with these great ideals and values of life — not a lecture but a poetry. The modern money hunting films of blood curdling tales reveal crime in all its nakedness, apparently with the idea of scaring away their audience from such vices but ultimately end only in

popularising the crime. The filthy lucre of Indra has seduced art to its own nefarious purposes. From this must arise once again the purified art in communion with higher ideals of Gautama. The story of Ahalya, according to this kind of thought, is really esthetics, the science of beauty, giving through its parable the history of its fall and rise.

(To be continued)

VOL. III No. 2 APRIL, 1954

TAMIL CULTURE

A Quarterly Review dedicated to the study of Tamiliana

 Rs. 5 yearly

TAMIL CULTURE

Subscriptions, advertisements, and remittances should be addressed to: The Manager Tamil Literature Society, 52, New Colony, Tuticorin, South India.

Remittance for a single copy may be sent in stamps. A single subscription in best paid by money order addressed to the Manager.

Cheques under Rs. 20 are usually not accepted, and cheques not drafted on a Tuticorin bank should be covered by a clearing commission.

V. P. P. Charges are extra.

Subscriptions and remittances are also received at the following:

CEYLON: Colombo Book Centre,
20, Parsons Road,
Colombo.

Rates of Subscription (*Annual*)

India, Ceylon	U. K.	U. S. A.
Burma, Malaya	8 sh.	1·50
Rs. 5.		

Single copies: One rupee eight annas.

Literary communications, Exchange, and Books for review should be addressed to the Editor, "Tamil Culture," Tamil Literature Society, 52, New Colony, Tuticorin, South India.

To secure their return if not accepted, the Manuscripts offered for publication should be accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope. The Editor does not take any responsibility for Manuscripts that may be lost. All literary communications should be typewritten.

The expression of individual views by Authors of signed articles does not imply editorial endorsement.

VOL. III NO. 2 APRIL, 1954

TAMIL CULTURE

A Quarterly Review dedicated to the study of Tamiliana

Dr. Schweitzer, the 'World's Greatest Man' and The Kural

A SENTHAMILAN

THE man, who was paradoxically known as 'the famous man nobody knows', became the famous man everybody knows when on the morning of November 1, 1953, the news of the award of the Nobel Peace Prize for 1952 to Dr. Albert Schweitzer, musician, theologian, philosopher, author and medical missionary was broadcast to the world. His remarkable life and work had already earned him titles such as 'the world's greatest man', 'a saint of our time', 'the 'truest Christian in Christendom' and a 'Rishi of the 20th Century'. Three years ago, he was chosen by the New York Arts Council as the 'individual living today with the best solution of the world's problems.'

Dr. Schweitzer was born on January 14, 1875, at Kaysberg (Alsace) of Swiss parents. When he was 21, he made a resolve which, to quote his own words, read :—

"I would consider myself justified in living until I was 30 for Science and Art in order to devote myself from that time forward to the direct service of humanity."

His academic career was brilliant ; he became successively Doctor of Philosophy, Doctor of Theology and Doctor of Music. Whilst still in his twenties, he was recognised as one of the most powerful intellectuals in Europe and, whether as an interpreter of the organ music of Bach, as a Christian

Scholar or as an original thinker and philosopher, his fame amongst the intellectual elite was unique. Amongst his various works, the most famous are :

Philosophy	*Theology*	*Music*
Philosophy of Civilisation. Civilisation & Ethics. Indian thought and its development.	The Quest for historical Jesus. Paul and his interpreters.	Biography of Bach. The Construction of Organs.

When he reached the age of 30, he deliberately gave up his brilliant career and took to the study of medicine, as a preliminary to a life of 'direct service of humanity' in accordance with his earlier resolve. After securing the Doctorate of Medicine, he left for one of the most primitive areas in Africa to serve a race known to the world as 'Cannibals' and has, for more than 40 years now, steadfastly stuck to his self imposed task and mission. His solution for the world's problems has been admirably summed up by him as

"Reverence for life — for all life, Simply because it is living."

In his book *Indian thought and Development* originally published in German in 1935, he shows a profound insight into the development of Indian thought from pre-historic days right up to the time of Mahatma Gandhi and Tagore, and deals with his subject in a surprisingly sympathetic but not uncritical manner. In the preface, he remarks :

"What I liked about it also was that Indian ethics are concerned with the behaviour of man to all living beings and not merely with his fellow men and to human society."

but frankly adds :—

"Perhaps those who have grown up within the sphere of Indian thought will find it difficult to reconcile themselves to the purely critical nature of my investigation. I ask their pardon in advance"

* * * * *

"What may also give offence to Indian readers is my opinion that world and life negation in itself is devoid of ethics and that the

Ahimsa commandment owed its origin not to a feeling of pity, but to the idea of keeping pure from the world, and that it was only later that Ahimsa adopted the motive of compassion."

What is of interest to us here is that, after a penetrating and understanding analysis of Indian thought as represented by ancient Hinduism, Brahmanism, Buddhism, and the Bhagvad-Gita, he concludes :—

'The fact that Brahmanism, Buddhism and ancient Hinduism teach no ethic of action does not mean that this was an unknown thing to the ancient Indians. Among the Indian people world and life affirmation and ethics are present. Wherever ethics reaches a certain height in the presence of world and life affirmation, the idea of active love cannot fail to evolve. Among the Indians, just as among the Greeks, this ethic of subjective activity has difficulty in making its way alongside the ethic of duties demanded by society and objectively established by tradition and law. In some way or other, nevertheless, it does come into existence.

'The case stands, then, thus — that the idea of active love is probably present somewhere in popular thought, but that Brahmanic, Buddhist and ancient Hindu thought cannot find room for it within their world-view! Because of the world and life negation which they represent, they cannot have anything to do with the world and life affirmation which is manifested in its greatest strength in the ethic of activity. Consequently the Bhagavad-Gita restricts itself — which at first is so incomprehensible for us Europeans — to the justification of activity which is objectively necessary by reason of birth and caste. It believes, although in reality this does not hold good, that this concession to world and life affirmation, is still compatible with the maintenance of world and life negation. But the world-view of world and life negation cannot acquiesce in subjective activity, especially not to the extent demanded by the ethic of love, without putting itself out of commission. This is the explanation of the exceedingly strange fact that through long centuries Indian thought remains so incomplete in the matter of ethics!

'But finally it is nevertheless compelled by the popular ethic, which is developing without such hindrances, to concern itself with the ethic of active love and thereby to disregard the world-view of world and life negation. Of course it is Hinduism alone that is in the position to face this undertaking.

That the idea of active love did arise in the popular ethics of India in fairly ancient times we know from many stories we meet in her literature and especially through the ethical maxims found in the Kural, a work which probably belongs to the 2nd century A. D.

'The Kural is a collection of 1,330 maxims in distich form, attributed to the weaver Tiruvalluvar. In the matter of authorship it is probable that not all the maxims are Tiruvalluvar's own, but that he also versified some which were ancient possessions of the people.

'Kural means short strophe. Tiruvalluvar is really not a name, but a title borne by the religious teachers who work among the lower castes in the south of India.

'The work is written in the Tamil language. This, like Canarese, which also belongs to the south of India, is an indigenous Indian language (Dravidian), not Indo-Aryan. We know nothing certain about the life of Tiruvalluvar.

'Legend reports that he was married, and that when a man inquired of him which is the right thing to do, to live as father of a family or as a hermit, he demonstrated the answer. He called his wife who happened to be at the spring. She left her water-jar hanging in the water and hurried to ask him what he wanted. When, according to Tamil custom, she set before him at breakfast cold rice left over from supper, he declared it was burning his tongue. She immediately blew on it to cool it. At midday he let something fall and called for a light to pick it up by. She straightway brought a lamp. Thereupon the inquirer said, "I have the answer! If so excellent a woman falls to one's share, the practice of domestic virtue is more excellent; otherwise it is better to become a hermit."

'What a difference between the Kural and the Laws of Manu, which originated some four centuries before it! In the latter, under the dominance of the Brahmanic spirit, world and life affirmation is still just tolerated alongside world and life negation. In the Kural world and life negation is only like a distant cloud in the sky. In 250 maxims — they form the concluding part of the work — earthly love is lauded. Later times, because they cause offence, interpret them allegorically as concerning the love of the soul to God.

'Christianity similarly interprets the Song of Solomon a love-song probably originally sung at weddings and later absorbed into the Old Testament, as if it described the relations of the soul to its heavenly Redeemer.

'In the ethics of the Kural, as in those of the Laws of Manu, the idea of reward has a place. The way of virtue is recommended because it leads to a better reincarnation or to liberation from re-birth. Alongside of this is found also the naive view which is so conspicuous in Chinese ethics that moral behaviour results in earthly welfare and immoral in misfortune. Nevertheless, ethics in the Kural are not so entirely dominated by the idea of reward as in Brahmanism, Buddhism and the Bhagavad-Gita. We already find here the knowledge that good must be done for its own sake. It shines out from various maxims.**

"Even though one should say, there is no higher world, it is still good to give" (222) — "True liberality asks nothing in return. What does the world give in reaurn to the cloud that gives ~~it~~ rain?" (211)

'Whilst the Bhagavad-Gita in a forced and chilly manner gives as a motive for remaining in active life that it is in accordance with the order of the Universe, the Kural justifies it — what an advance! — by the idea of ethical activity. Work and profit place a man in a position to do good.

**The quotations are from the German translation "Der Kurral" by Karl Graul, D. D., Leipzing 1856 (Derfling and Franks) and London 1856 (Williams and Norgate) (Bibliotheca Tamulica).

"All staying at home and waiting on the household have for their end hospitality and alms-giving" (81) — "All property gained by industrious toil is there for good men in order that they may practise well-doing" (212).

'According to the Kural, duty is not confined, as in the Bhagavad-Gita, to what the caste calling involves, but consists in general in "all that is good". Maxims about joy in activity, such as one would not expect from Indian lips, bear witness to the strength of the world and life affirmation present in the Kural.

"Even fate did not permit of success; the striving in itself rewards the exertion of one's body" (619) — "If one accepts the burden as joy, there emerges a splendour for which even one's enemies are eager." (630)

'Like the Buddha and the Bhagavad-Gita the Kural desires inner freedom from the world and a mind free from hatred. Like them it stands for the commandement not to kill and not to damage.** It has appropriated all the valuable ethical results of the thought of world and life negation. But in addition to this ethic of inwardness there appears in the Kural the living ethic of love.

"The loveless man takes everything for himself; the man full of love gives even his own bones to others." (72) — "The life of a soul without love is like the sprouting of a dried-up tree on stony ground" (78) — "What help can all the outer limbs give, if the inner limb of the body, love, is wanting?" (79) — "If one weighs the value of the good deed done without consideration of the advantage: Its kindness is greater than the ocean." (103 — "To assuage the deadly hunger of the poor is the treasury of the rich" (226) — "Wealth in benevolence is the wealth of wealths. Wealth in possessions the mob has also." (241).

'With sure strokes the Kural draws the ideal of simple ethical humanity. On the most varied questions concerning the conduct of man to himself and to the world its utterances are characterised by nobility and good sense. *There hardly exists in the literature of the world a collection of maxims in which we find so much lofty wisdom.*

** In opposition to the Buddha, the Kural decides that one may not eat meat even when one is quite innocent of the slaughter of the animal,

"If a kind man inherits property, it is as if a fruit-tree bears ripe fruit in the middle of a village" (216 — "The child 'Merry' born of love lives by the care of the well-to-do-nurse 'Well-being'" (757) — "The wealth of him who gives nothing to the poor is as if a very fine lady grows old in solitude" (1007).

"The gift is not the measure of the gift: its measure is in the magnanimity of the receiver" (105).

"Better than spending with a happy heart is to carry on sweet speech with a happy face" (92) — For those who do not understand how to be friendly, the great wide world, even in bright daylight, lies in darkness" (999).

"Among all treasures that may be gained none can compare with attaining to freedom from envying any man" (162)

"To forget good is not good; immediately to forget what is not good is good" (108) —

"Holy as a penitent is he who forgets bitter speech from the lips of one who is excited." (159)

"Self-control rushes into thick darkness" (121) — "He who is not eager for pleasure, but knows that pain is natural, will remain free from distress" (628).

"Outward purity comes through water: purity of the heart is manifested in sincerity" (298).

"Those who are considerate and forbearing without letting their duty suffer: the world gladly gives itself to such" (578) — "The world rests on the excellence of the good prince who knows how to change enmity into friendship." (874)

"Even if they are highly placed, those who are not high-minded are not high; even if their station be humble, those who are not low-minded are yet not low" (973).

"If thou dost harm to thy neighbour in the morning, harm comes of itself to thee in the afternoon." (319)

"Asking the way, happiness goes of itself to him who is undaunted in spirit" (594) — "Whoever says, 'I will work for my family', before him there goes at once the goddess of good fortune, her robe well girded-up (i. e. as a fellow-workers)" (1024).

"Take no pleasure, even if thou shouldst win, in gambling. Even winning is as if a fish swallows the metal hook." (1931)

"The friendship of well-coducted men waxes like the new moon: the friendship of fools wanes like the full moon." (782).

"Husbandmen are the axle-pin on the wagon of the world: they give support to all who, not caring for husbandry, are engaged in other work" (1032).

"So a natural and ethical world and life affirmation of this kind was present among the people of India at the beginning of our era, although nothing of it can be found in Brahmanism, Buddhism and Bhagavad-Gita Hinduism. It gradually penetrates into Hindu thought through the great religious teachers who had sprung from the lower castes and lived among and felt with the people."

It should be a matter of considerable gratification to every Tamilian that this unsolicited tribute to Tamilian thought — which in fact is much anterior chronologically to Indo-Aryan thought and which had never surrendered wholly even today to Brahmanic thought — should come from an European Savant of great repute living in the remote Cannibal-ridden jungles of Africa. What is significant but not surprising to us Tamils in this tribute is that, after covering the entire field of Indian thought and philosophy, Dr. Schweitzer could trace the ethic of activity and the idea of active love only in the Kural.

Another interesting fact is that Dr. Schweitzer had studied the Kural from the German translation 'Der Kural' by Karl Graul published in 1856. As is only to be expected in a translation, particularly where the translation is by one to whom Tamil is an alien tongue, the quotations given above do not always bring out accurately the full significance or the terse beauty of the original aphorisms. If fresh translations of the Kural in important languages of the world could be brought out by Tamil Scholars, in collaboration, where possible, with foreign Scholars proficient in their respective languages, it will greatly promote the cause of world peace, in furtherance of which the Nobel Prize was awarded to Dr. Schweitzer.

The Original Home of the Dravidians: Their Wanderings in Prehistoric Times, B. C. 4,500 to 1,500.

H. S. David, B.A., PH.D., (Lond).

THE EVIDENCE : ITS NATURE AND CREDIBILITY

THE evidence for the statements made in this small article has been carefully pieced together from a comparative study of philology, ethnology and archaeology. It is impossible within this small compass to detail all the pieces of evidence : to do so would entail a large volume. I would refer any person who is keenly interested in this subject to Stuart Piggot's *Prehistoric India,* 1952, a Pelican Book.

SUMER AND ELAM.

The earliest civilization we know of is that of Sumer in Mesopotamia, now called Iraq. The rudiments of civilization there can be detected even as early as 5,000 B. C. In the next millennium this Sumerian culture became established on the Euphrates and Tigris and likewise began to expand north-eastwards into Elam, now called Iran or Persia. In the holy Bible, at Genesis 14 : 1, Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, is mentioned as a contemporary of the patriarch, Abraham, C. 2,000 B. C. By that time the Elamites had achieved a high level of culture. But two thousand years earlier they were definitely behind the contemporary Sumerians in culture. Both these

---

H. S. David is Director of Oriental Studies and History, St. Patrick's College Jaffna.

peoples, however, like the original Egyptians in the Nile Valley, belong to the same Mediterranean race that is responsible for all the early civilizations. At the present day it includes a large number of groups of peoples stretching from Portugal and Spain to India. Here it forms a dominant element in the population of the north and is widespread in the south among the upper social classes. (The word "India" is used throughout this article in the sense of the greater India that includes Ceylon and Pakistan as well.) Such people are medium in stature, olive-brown in colour, with a long head and face, black hair, large eyes and a narrow nose. In Tamil literature there is frequent mention of the very large eyes, especially of the heroine, e. g. malina malar ttatankan = eyes as large as the lotus blossom.

THE DRAVIDIAN EXODUS FROM ELAM.

Between 4,500 and 4,000 B. C. the Elamites made their first advances towards civilization : at this stage there was a definite Sumerian influence. At Susa the Elamites made excellent faience beads wherewith their women folk adorned themselves rather liberally. Such an elaborate technique as the making of faience beads bespeaks a high degree of culture. North-east of the Elamites, but within their influence, lived the Dravidian races. A section of them cherished the Elamite civilization and peacefully extended their colonies into what are now termed Afghanistan and Baluchistan, especially into the Indian Makran. But the vast majority of the Dravidians at this epoch were nomadic herdsmen. They roamed from the frontiers of Sumer and Elam to the valleys of the Oxus and Jaxartes, now termed the Amu Daria and Syr Daria respectively, in Russian Turkistan. In these river-valleys the Dravidians learned to develop the city-life or civilization, which their ancestors had seen in their dealings with Elamites and Sumerians.

THE HORSE.

Quite early in their sojourn in Russian Turkistan, the Dravidians came into contact with a very important animal that was unknown for a long time to the ancient cultures,

namely the horse. So unaccustomed were the Sumerians to this animal that when they saw it first, C. 3000 B. C., they called it "the ass of the mountains". It was not an original inhabitant of Mesopotamia. In the steppes of Central Asia, however, it is a common animal. The Dravidians tamed the horse and used it as an occasional drought animal in lieu of the ox; but they never learnt to employ the horse to draw a war-chariot. This was the contribution of the Indo-Europeans at a much later date, C. 1,800 B. C. The war-chariot drawn by the horse gave them the decided advantage that enabled them to overrun Europe and Western Asia as far as North India between 1,800 and 1,500 B. C. The swiftness of the war-horse, rather than any qualities of the Indo-European peoples, was mainly responsible for the Aryan victories and the consequent Aryan myth.

THE DRAVIDIANS AND THEIR NEIGHBOURS C. 3,000 B. C.

In the third millennium B. C., however, the Dravidians lived on a footing of complete equality with both the Aryans to the west and the Mongolians to the east of them. It was during this period that the Aryans and the Dravidians first loaned from each other those words which now appear to persons like the late Swamy Gnana Prakasar of Nallur to have a common base, apart from those words which both peoples borrowed from the Sumerians. At the same time the affinities which Dr. Caldwell saw in certain words between the Dravidian and the Mongolian languages stem from the close association of these peoples in the West-Central Asiatic steppes round about 3,000 B. C. The Mongolian family of languages has also been termed Turanian, Scythian, Ural-Altai and so on, by different philologists. A section of the Dravidians in Turkistan migrated northeastwards into Finland, Lapland and Esthonia, while another section went northeastwards into N. E. Siberia, where they are now called "Samoiyedes". Professor T. Burrow of Oxford has proved conclusively the common ancestry of the Dravidian with the languages spoken in the above-mentioned areas in Northern Europe and N. E. Siberia.

THE ARRIVAL OF THE DRAVIDIANS IN NORTH INDIA

On this issue a great light is thrown by the archaeological excavations carried through, during the last 33 years, in Baluchistan, Sind and the Punjab, especially at the two sites, Harappa and Mohenjo-daro. But it was neither the Punjab, nor Sind, which was the scene of the first Dravidian settlements in India. It was Baluchistan. This fact shows decisively that the Dravidians, like the Aryans a millennium later, entered India by the N. W. passes, the Bolan and Khyber. Near the Bolan pass are the first Dravidian settlements in India, namely at Mehi, Kulli, Nal and Amri, C. 2900 B. C. There is evidence for Sumerian trade with these regions, as well as for the presence of Indian merchants in the great cities of Elam and Sumer — with ivory, apes and peacocks, precious ointments in strange stone pots, an alien tongue and religious customs. About four hundred years later began the Harappa Empire, stretching for more than a thousand miles, from Baluchistan to the Himalayas and the valley of the Ganges. The Harappa culture is in the main independent of direct Sumerian influence. This is shown by the rarity of the typically Sumerian cylinder-seals in the Harappa Empire, the greatest in extent of territory in the third millennium B. C. The Harappa civilization is known only in its mature form. It had no known beginnings, no tentative early phases before the outlines were firmly fixed. It was an urban and literate culture, using copper and bronze, but not iron, for tools and weapons.

THE OVERTHROW OF THE DRAVIDIAN EMPIRE OF HARAPPA.

This overthrow took place in a series of plundering raids by the Aryans between 1,800 and 1,500 B. C. Their first leader was Indra. The highly-evolved Harappa culture employed massive fortifications and dominated the river-system of N. W. India. Indra came there as the fort-destroyer, in Sanskrit

"Puramdara". Indra "rends forts, as age consumes a garment", says a verse of the Rig-veda. The citadels of the Harappa Empire were wrecked and plundered by the Aryan warbands. Like the Amurru in Mesopotamia, the Aryans at this date were "a host whose onslaught was like a hurricane, a people who had never known a city". Most of the Dravidians who could do so migrated accordingly to South India, where their descendants speak Tamil, Malayalam, Toda, Tulu, Kannada and Telugu. In N. W. India the Brahui-speaking Dravidians became an islet in the expanding ocean of Aryan cultures. In N. E. and Central India there remained Dravidian isles, speaking such languages as Malto, Kui, Kurukh or Oraon, Ghond etc. Among these, the Kota tongue has been the chief field of study for two distinguished Western scholars, Professor Emeneau of the University of California and Professor T. Burrow of Oxford University. These two intend to publish a Glossary of the Kota language. It is time therefore that sons of the soil, whether in India or in Ceylon, become interested in these studies and from secure foundations build up the edifice of Dravidian linguistics.

Place-Names in Tamil-Akam

R. P. Sethupillai, B.A., B.L.

PLACE-NAMES in every land are of great interest to its people and particularly so to its philologists. The ancient Tamils observed that four different kinds of terrain with well-defined features and characteristics comprised the country that was Tamil-akam. Hills and dales and mountain slopes formed one kind. Woods and wolds and wooded glens were another. Watered fields and their immediate environs comprised a third. The sea-shore with its sand dunes was the fourth. These four kinds of land came to be designated by them as *Kurinci*, *Mullai*, *Marutam*, and *Neytal*, respectively. As thus the Earth was seen to comprise four different kinds of terrain, it naturally came to be called Nāl-nilam or "Foursome Land". In later times, however, inland sandy stretches with sparse furze and prickly shrubs came also to be recognized as a distinct species (*palai*).

KURINCI

Many a mountain range rich and fertile, lies within the borders of Tamil-Nād. We shall now proceed to examine the names of some of the villages nestling in and about them. Tiru-Vēnkata-malai forms the northern limit of Tamil-akam. A Tamil poet, who was a contemporary of the grammarian Tolgapier has defined the boundaries of Tamil-Nād. According to him "the ancient land where Tamil is spoken is the one that lies in between Tiru-Venkatam in the north and Kumari in the south. As this mountain was the dividing line between the languages spoken north of it and the language spoken south of it, it came to be referred to commonly as Vata-malai or

---

Translated by M. S. Thayappa Pillai, B.A., from Professor R. P. Sethu Pillai's book entitled "Ūrum Pērum", Madras, 1950.

the Northern Mountain. It also came to be known as Tiru-malai or the Sacred Hill and as Tiru-pati or the Sacred Seat by virtue of its association with divinity.

The Ānai-malai, or the Elephant Rock, the Chirumalais or the Lesser Mountains, the Pasu-malai, or the Cow Hill, all lie in close vicinity to the city of Mathurai, the capital of the Pandya kingdom. Ānai-malai was the abode of Jaina monks who thronged there in large numbers in the distant past. The Chiru-malai which yields delicious plantains is also of ancient renown. "Silappathikāram" or "The Lay of the Anklet" gives a picturesque description of the terrain.

A hill lying close to Madras has been named Parangi-malai. It is reputed to have acquired this name because the Portugese or Feringhees settled down there about two hundred years ago. And in recent times a new town-ship has developed in the vicinity of Tiruchirāpalli; It has taken the name of Pon-malai or the Golden Rock after the hillock standing by it.

Lord Murugan is worshipped in Tamil-akam as the regional deity of Kurinchi or mountainous country. The Tamils consider every hill as Murugan's own. A few among them are however held in special sanctity as the fountain-heads of his benevolence and grace. Palani-malai in the Pandya territory, Swāmi-malai in the Chola territory, Thanikai-malai in the Thondai region, and other hills of this kind are venerated as sacred seats of Lord Murugan.

The peak of a hill is denoted by the word Kōtu. A pilgrim centre in the Salem District known as Thiru-Cheng-Kōtu, is a place of great antiquity. Silappathikāram refers to Murugan as the "Lord who ever abides in Chenthil of high renown, Cheng-Kōtu, Ven-Kunru, and Ērakam". It is therefore evident that Thiru-Cheng-Kōtu is one of the ancient spots sacred to Murugan. It is said that the place is so named, because of the ochre-coloured encrustation of the mammoth rocks forming the hill.

The word 'Malai' signifies a lofty mountain range according to the literary usage of the Tamil language. Any eminence of a lesser height than a mountain is named Kunru, or hill; and still lesser ones go by the name of Pārai, Arai, and Kal, all meaning a rock.

There are a few places in Tamil-Nād having Kunru as their nominal suffix. Tiru-Param-Kunram and Tiru-Kalu-Kunram are hill-temples sanctified by the Tamil poet-saints in their devotional hymns. The word 'Kunram' has been corrupted into 'Kunam' in the North Arcot District. The place-names of Ner-Kunram, Netun-Kunram, and Pūn-Kunram appear now as Ner-Kunam, Netun-Kunam, and Pūn-Kunam, respectively, as a result of this change.

Any place adjoining a Kunru or hill takes name as Kunr-ūr or Kunr-attūr or Kunr-ak-kuti. The stem Kunram in such place-names changes to Kunnam in usage in most cases. The settlement known as Coonoor in the Nilgris or Blue Mountain is really Kunr-ūr. Besides, Kunrathur in Thondai region and Kunrakuti in Pandi are now referred to as Kunnathūr and Kunnakuti, respectively.

The suffix Pārai is seen in the names of many places. Places bearing names as Pūmpārai, Chippipārai, Thattai-pārai, Kuttai-parai etc. are current in Tamil-Nād.

Among the one hundred and eight sacred places held in veneration by the followers of the Vaishnava cult, Thiru-vel-arai is one. The temple in this place, the presiding deity of which has been glorified in hymns by Periyālvār and Tiru-Mangai-Ālvār, stands on a sheet of white rock. Svēta-giri is the white rock and has lent its name to this seat of the tutelary deity.

The suffix 'Kal' occurs in the names of some places. Tindu-k-kal, anglicized as Dindi-gal, is a town in Pandi. It would appear that the name of the rock to the west of the place became the name of the town also. In the past the fort erected on this rock served as a bastion commanding the gates in the boundary line between the Pandi and the Kongu region.

(modern districts of Nilgris, Salem and Coimbatore). Nāma-k-kal is a place in the Salem district. Its original name was Ārai-k-kal. The word Ārai means a fortress wall. The fortress now defunct standing on a high rock is significant of the name of this place.

Sanskrit equivalents of the Tamil word "malai" can also be seen in a few place-names. *Giri* occurs in place-names like Siva-giri and Bhuvana-giri, and "*Achalam*" in Virudāchalam, Vēdachalam, Vênkatāchalam, Thanikāchalam and the like. Besides, *Sailam* and *Adri* may also be noticed occasionally. There is a small village lying at the foot of Pothiyamalai in the Western Ghats Tirunelveli district, and it bears the name of Siva-sailam. Nāngunēri known as Vānamāmalai has got yet another name as Totadri in Sanskrit.

The people who dwelt in the hilly tracts or Kurinchi were known as Kuravars; and their settlement was called a Kurichi. This will be evident from the line: "Kurichi is the abode of ours, the Kuravar tribe, O Lady mine" occurring in a Kura-vanchi or Idyll depicting Kurava life. There are very many places at the foot of the Western Ghats in the Tirunelvēli district having this nominal suffix in common in their names. These names are strung together beginning with Ālwar-Kurichi, and sung to tune in the Tirunelvêli district. Although Kurichi denoted originally only a Kuravar settlement, yet in later times it came to stand for hamlets occupied by other people also. Kallakurichi is the name of a place in the South Arcot district. There is also a place called Brahmana-kurichi in the Ramnad district.

MULLAI

In the distant past Tamil-nad was covered all over with luxurious vegetation. Tamil classics make mention of the fact that Kari-kāl-valavan and other great kings disafforested many of these areas, and converted them into arable land. All the same the existence at one time of forests in these areas and their characteristic features can be inferred from the names of the places there. It is seen from the sacred lore of the

Tamils that the places held in great sanctity now as places glorified by Poet-saints in their hymns were mostly *Vanam* or wood-lands in the past. The original name of Chidambaram was Thillai-vanam. Mathurai was known as Katampavanam, and Tirunelvêli as Venu-vanam. Puranas mention many more *Vanams* of this kind.

It is also evident from certain place-names in the Tamil land that there was many a Kātu or forest. Names like Ār-k-kātu, Ālan-kātu, Vēr-kātu and Kala-k-kātu are suggestive of this. Ār is another name for the Ātti tree. "Silappathikāram" refers to the Chola king wearing the wreath of Atti flowers as "the Chola of the chaplet of Ār". A tract covered by a forest of Ār was named Ār-k-kātu. This name now stands for both the tract and a town therein. There is besides a hamlet known as Ār-pākkam close to Ār-k-kātu town. Furthermore, ancient capital of the Chola territory bore the name of Ār-ūr. And after it was glorified by the Tamil hymnists, it is now known as Tiru-ār-ūr.

There are several places in Tamil-nād with the nominal suffix of Kātu. Tiru-ālan-kātu lies close to Palayanūr in Thondai region. Pala-vêr-kātu lies in the vicinity of Ponnēri. It looks as though this name came to be given to this place because of the Vêl or Acacia forest characterising this area. The Westerners who colonized this spot have however corrupted the name as Puli-k-kātu (Pulicat) or Tiger-Forest. The forest in the Chola country that witnessed the battle that Nedumchelian the Pandya king gave to the combined forces of all the other Tamil kings, is immortalised as Talai-ālan-kātu. There is again the hill-station of Yōrkād at a short distance of the Salem town. The place came to be called Ēri-k-kātu as the settlement there developed on the shores of a picturesque lake lying amidst an enchanting woodland scenery. The present name Yêrkād is thus a corrupt form of the original Ēri-k-kātu. The place known as Kala-k-kātu on the banks of the Pachai-aru in the Tirunelvēli district is of great antiquity. A spot covered by a dense growth of Kalā shrubs (wild cherries) came to be named as Kala-k-kātu, situated as it is on the banks of the Pachai-aru on a high-road connecting South Pāndi

with Malayālam (Travancore), it presents all the features of a hill-terrain and a river-fed plain.

The Tamil word *Kā* means a thick grove. It occurs in another form also as *Kāvu*. See Āriyan-kāvu on the Western Ghats beyond Chen-kōttai (Shencottah or Red Fort). Āriyan is one of the names of Ai-yanār or Shastha. Ai-yanār passes under the name of Ai-yappan in Travancore. Ai-yappan is worshipped in Ariyan-kāvu with great fervour to this day. It will thus be seen that the place took the name of Āriyan-kāvu, because Ai-yappan was enshrined there amidst the expansive groves on the mountain slopes of the Western Ghats.

One of the places in the Thondai region held sacred to Tiru-māl, (Vishnu) is called Tiru-t-tan-kā, literally meaning "the sacred coolsome grove". Tiru-mangai-Alvar refers to Tiru-māl who presides and sheds grace over this verdant beauty-spot as Tirumāl of emerald hue, the Beacon-Light of Thiru-tan-kā etc. This term has come to be adopted, as the name of the temple itself (Beacon-Light Temple). There is yet another place in the Chola country sacred to Tiru-māl known as Kā-valam-pāti. The same hymnist mentions this holy place in the midst of groves as a seat of Kannan (Krishna).

Any place presenting to the view a luxurious growth of trees, plants and creepers, is denoted by the significant Tamil word "Polil". A grove with a thick growth of Āl (Banyan) trees came to be immortalised as Tiru-Ālam-Polil in "Tevaram", (literally meaning 'The Lords' 'Wreath', being the common name for a collection of hymns in adoration of Siva,) Tiru-gnāna-sambandar, the hymnist, has adorned the presiding deity of Tiru-Ālam-Polil with a wreath of songs. Then again there is a beautiful little place nestling in the enchanting groves, fragrant and cool, off the slopes of the Courtallam hill noted for its water-fall. The ancient Tamils who delighted in the contemplation of the natural beauty of this place called it Paim-Polil or "Emerald-Grove". Such meaningful and befitting a name has now been corrupted into Pampuli.

Tantalai is another Tamil word meaning a grove. It occurs in other forms also as Tantarai and Tantalam. The present township of Kulitalai north of Tiruchirapalli was known as Kuli-th-tantalai in the past. The ancient Tamils gave the name of Kuli-th-tantalai to a settlement that developed amidst the luxuriant groves in a shallow basin on the western bank of the Kavêri. Places like Pūn-tantalam, Palan-tantalam, and Perum-tantalam can still be seen in the Thondai region. All these places must have been the sites of groves at one time in the past.

The word Chōlai (Shola) also occurs as a suffix in the names of a few places. Alakar-koyil to the north of Mathurai was known as Tiru-māl-irum-cholai in the times gone by. Tiru-murugā-rrupatai mentions Pala-mutir-sōlai or "the grove replete with ripening fruits" as one of the six military encampments of Lord Murugan, the War-God of the Tamils. There is besides a place by the name of Talai-ch-chōlai in the Salem district. There is yet another known as Tiru-valar-sōlai near Thiruchirāpalli.

A piece of land laid out as a garden with trees and plants interspersed according to design is called a Tōppu in Tamil. There are places bearing the name "Tōppu". Manti-tōppu can be seen as a place-name in the Tirunelveli district; Man-tōppu in the Ramnad district; Nelli-tōppu in the Tanjore district; and Vauvāl-tōppu in the South Arcot district.

'Curam' in Tamil denotes a barren tract of sand and sandy lawn. The place Tiru-c-churam in Thondai region now goes by the corrupted name of Tiru-sūlam. The original name of another place in the same region is Thiru-itai-c-churam. This name also has been transformed into Tiru-vati-sūlam.

Two Sanskrit terminations meaning a forest, namely, Vanam, and Āraniyam can also be seen in certain place-names. Vanam occurs in place-names like Punnai-vanam, Katampa-vanam, and Tinti-vanam. And Āraniyam occurs in the name Vedāranyam,

Some places in Tamil-nād take their names after trees of a single variety. Karavīram is one among the several places sacred to Siva, and the deity there has been glorified by hymnists. It is the name of a tree which yields golden flowers. This tree is worshipped in the temple at Karavīram the sacred tree of the locality. Tiru-pain-gnīli, yet another sacred spot enjoying the honour of finding a place in "Thevaram", also derived its name from the name of a tree. Pain-nīli is the name of the green-skinned plantain fruits. A place which abounded with this variety of plantains came to be called Thiru-pain-nīli by the ancient Tamils.

Besides, Vākai (Rain tree), and Punnai (mast wood tree) have lent their names to places in the North Arcot district. Kānjiram (Nux Vomica) and Karunkāli (Ebony) are place-names in the Sivaganga area of the Ramnad district. As trees like Āl (Banyan), Arasu (Pipal), Atti (Fig), Ātti(?), Puli (Tamarind), Punnai (white laurel), Panai (Palmyra), Thennai (Cocoanut), Vêmpu (Margosa) and others abound in Tamil-akam, places take their names after the tree which is a characteristic feature of the spot.

Nāval (Jambulensis) is the name of a place. Sundarar, one of the three hymnists who contributed to the *Tēvāram* was born there. The Periya-purānam or "The Lives of the Saints" mentions him as a follower of the cult of Siva of long descent, born in Nāval, who expounded the obtruse sacred lore of the Tamils. His place of birth and parentage are evident from this. This Nāval was sanctified as Tiru-nāval because of Sundarar's nativity there. His admirers who came to know later that he was treated by Lord Siva as his boon companion, renamed this place for a second time as Tiru-nāval-nallūr. In course of time this beautiful name has been corrupted into Tiru-nāma-nallūr.

Again, a place on the Southern bank of the Gedilam river in the South Arcot District densely grown over with Pātiri trees and so thickly covered by jungle as to afford shelter to tigers, came to be called Thiru-p-pātiri-puli-yūr. There is another Puli-ūr south of Viriddhāchalam. Thevaram

hymnists have given this place the name of Eruk-k-attam-puli-ūr. The word Attam means a jungle. Eruk-k-attom denotes therefore a jungle of Erukku or leafy cactus yielding a milky exudation. A township that developed in a thick tiger-infested jungle of Erukku plants was accordingly named Eruk-k-attam-puli-ūr. Erukku plants bearing sweet-scented white flowers so dear to the heart of Siva can still be seen close to the sanctum sanctorum of the temple there. This significant name has however been changed to Rajendrapattanam in later times.

The villages which crop up in Mullai Land or the land of brushwood and shrubbery mostly go by the name of Pāti. The Thevaram mentions Thiru-a-p-pāti as the place where Chandēswarar tended his cows and worshipped the Lord. All Tamil literature in general refers to Gokulam, the place where Kannan grew up, as Āyar-pāti or a village of cow-herds. Long, long ago a small hamlet came into being with the name of Vēla-p-pāti in the North Arcot district. It took that name because it was born in a forest, of Vêla trees (Acacia Aravica). In course of time the area was disafforested, and an extensive settlement was established on the site. Another settlement grew up with the name of Vêlūr in the vicinity of Vēla-p-padi in course of time. When however, Vēlūr came into prominence within historic times with bastions and battlements adorning its fortress walls of cut granite, Vēla-p-pāti which had appeared first got absorbed in Vêlūr. The village of Tiru-vali-tāyam, yet another sacred spot in the Thondai region, is now called by the crisp name of Pāti.

It is said that the Tamil word *Patti* also denoted a pastoral village. Although Pattis are a common feature all over Tamil-akam, they are to be seen in the largest number only in Pāndi. Thousands of Pattis of the kind of Kovilpatti, a centre of cotton industry in the Tirunelveli district, abound in the South.

Any pastoral area where sheep and cattle are tended, is called a *Mantai*. Places like Ven-mantai and Punjai-mantai can be seen in the North Arcot district. Every Tōda hamlet on the Nilgris (Blue Mountains) is known as a Manthu. The Tōdas are a pastoral tribe of great antiquity and importance, and their chief settlement is Ottaka-manthu. This place is Ootacamund in English, with a dimunitive, Ooty. It is inferred that the original correct form of the name must have been Ottai-k-kal-manthai, or the Cattle pen marked by a single monumental pillar-rock.

(To be Continued)

The Dravidian Question

By J. T. Cornelius, M. A., M. D., M. P. H., PH. D. (Lond).

FROM the earliest times, the Tamil country was known to be divided into three Kingdoms, the Cera or the Kerala, the Pandya, and the Chola. These three were well established Dravidian kingdoms in South India which had survived in to historic times. The Dravidian question raises the problem whether these three kingdoms represent two or three distinct races, or one race type and what race type or types they belong to, and if they are not of indigenous origin, from where they come into South India, and approximately when such immigration took place.

I shall briefly attempt in this article to answer these questions by producing three lines of evidence from Anthropological, Archaeological and Linguistic sources. As regards the race type, modern Anthropologists and Ethnographers like G. Elliot Smith, Edgar Thurston, Gilbert Slater, and Dr. Furer-Haimendorf regard them as of mediterranean stock and there is general agreement amongst the Anthropologists that the Dravidians belong to the great family of mediterranean stock who inhabited the whole of the mediterranean basin in pre-historic times, and their original home was in north Africa in common with the Egyptians and the other branches of mediterranean peoples. If the Dravidians are a mediterranean people as there is abundant evidence to prove this, and as pointed out by Dr. Furer-Haimendorf on Archaeological grounds in his recent speech at the International Congress of Anthropology and Ethnography in September 1952, the Dravidians brought the megalithic Iron-using culture into India, they certainly are not of indigenous origin, as stated by some Indian scholars according to Tamil traditions.

There are thus two points well established on scientific grounds for which there is indisputable evidence, namely

that the Dravidians of South India are of the mediterranean stock and that they are not of indigenous origin, and that they brought with them the Iron-culture and spoke the Dravidian languages. The Dravidians may therefore be defined as a non-Aryan, non-Semitic people of Mediterranean origin who have spoken what are known as the Dravidian languages from pre-historic times to the present day. The Dravidian languages are agglutinative and are chiefly spoken in South India. They are Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam and Tulu, and other less developed members of this group are Kuli and Kurk in Orissa and Bihar, Malto in Bihar and Bengal and Brahui in Baluchistan.

The eminent authority Dr. Caldwell in his *Comparative Grammar of Dravidian languages* published in 1851 wrote that Dravidian idioms exhibit traces of an ancient deep seated connection with prae-Sanskrit. Nallur Swami S. Gnana Prakasar in his excellent article published in '*Tamil Culture*', January 1953, on 'Linguistic' evidence for the common origin of the Dravidians and Indo-Europeans has brought to light this deep seated connection by discovering the elementary roots of many words derived from both Dravidian and Indo-European languages which were used in ancient times to describe common objects such as metals, weapons, domesticated animals and words for expressing human relationship which indicate a community of origin of the Indo-European and Dravidian peoples. Affinities with Celto-Teutonic languages have also been noted by Dr. Pope. Clemens Schoener in his Armalurisch has given a list of 800 place-names which are Dravidian in origin, in Central Europe and Western Asia.

I shall give place-names below of totemistic origin which clearly link many geographical places widely separated with places in South India. This linguistic geographical evidence furnishes indisputable proof of identity of the tribes or clans of mediterranean origin with those of the Dravidians as I shall subsequently indicate.

The eminent Italian Anthropologist G. Sergi in his classical work on the Mediterranean Race (1901) analyses it to

consist of four branches known as the Iberians who occupied South West Europe, Spain and Portugal, the Ligurians who occupied Northern Italy and also occupied under the name of Siculi the centre of Italy and all the Islands, the Pelasgians who occupied the Peninsula and Islands of Greece, and the Libyans who occupied Northern Africa. Because of the great antiquity of Egyptian civilisation and its very close resemblance to the Dravidian culture in temple architecture, agricultural customs and traditions we should strongly suspect the Egyptians also to belong to the mediterranean branch known as Libyans.

Sergi refers to the physical characteristics of Libyans as they were known to ancient Egyptians and as represented by them in their monuments. He states, that we find three types represented under the names of Tamahu and Lebu and that all these three differ from each other. He wanted to know which of these three represented the Libyans.

I am reproducing the three types as illustrated by Sergi in his book :

T. 1



Fig. 1.—Tamahu (Rosellini).

Sergi remarks that Tamahu type shows a slightly aquiline nose, a well cut mouth with thin lips, elongated chin, little beard and short moustache ; the hair is worn in little falling tresses like the people of Pun, two Ostrich feathers adorn the head. The second type differs from the first, the

T. 2



FIG. 2.—Tamahu (Rosellini).

Le. 3.



FIG. 3.—Lebu (Rosellini).

nose is strongly aquiline and the forehead receding, the lips thick, beard long. This is described as the 'Desert type'. The third type shows an aquiline nose prominent lips, long beard, and forehead shows prominent supra orbital ridges.

Sergi was inclined to consider Type I as likely to represent the Libyans. All the Italian and other Anthropologists including Sergi had been looking for one type to represent the Libyans. The Libyans were the neighbours of the Egyptians, and were constantly at war with them. As I shall point out subsequently the so-called four branches of the Mediterranean stock are a composite group made up of three elements, two of which are Mediterranean, and the third Anatolian or Armenoid. On the basis of totemistic symbols, these three types may be analysed into four components and classified as follows for purposes of identification :

	Skull type	Race type	Totemistic emblems	Tribe	
Libyans.	Dolichocephalic (Mediterranean) ...	Tamahu type I =Ta I ...	Grains Axe, Bull ...	Pelasgian	
	Fish clans (Minoans) ...	Tamahu type 2=Ta. 2... (Desert type) (Fishermen)	Goat, Bow (Snake) (Palm tree) ...	Iberians.	
	Brachycephalic ... Anatolian. Bird. ...	Lebu tybe 3 ... =Li. 3. ...	Ram (Wool) (Lim) ...	Ligurians.	
		=Si. I. ...	Olive tree or Sesane, oil, Boat (Horse) ...	Siculi.	
	Clans. (Mycenians) (Carians) ...	=Si. 2. ...		Tyrsenians. (Etruscans	
Dravidians.	Dolichocephalic	Tamahu type I =Ta. I ...	Grain. Bull Axe. ...	Pandavas	Tamils or Pandyas
	(Mediterranean) ...			Pandya	
	Pandya (fish clans)	Tamahu type 2 =Ta. 2 ...	Goat, Bow. (Snake) Palmyra.	Pandus	
				CulaNagas	
	Anatolian ... (bird clan)	Lebu type 3; Li. ... Akkan (shepherd) Lebu type 3 =Si. I	Sheep. ... (Wool) ...	Cera or Kerala. Kanarese, Telugu.	Cera
		(Sigarakuli) ... =(Si. 2.) ... Maravar.	Oil lamp. ... Boat. (Horse.) ...	Chola. Pallava.	Chola

Dravidians are thus identified with Libyans on the basis of totemistic emblems.

It must be mentioned on phonetic grounds that Tamahu is the Egyptian term for Tamalu or Tamil as in Egyptian " h " is used for ' l ', and the term Lebu is derived from ' Lim ', which means Ram or Sheep in the Sumerian language meaning a shepherd, and Sigara or Siculi or Sacculi is derived from ' Sack ' a bag in Tamil and from ' Sekku ', the oil press, which is an Anatolian invention. Oil was substituted for animal fat in oil lamps used in quarrying as a source of light in neolithic times. Artificial lighting of houses and of towns had thus its origin, and lamps, and oil have become important emblems. These two terms ' Sack ' + ' Sekku ' signify a Trader and the tribal name ' Siculi ' is derived from this term as well as ' Sekan ' in Tamil.

On totemestic basis of ' fish ' and ' bird ', it is possible to equate the Dravidians and Libyans, 'fish' and 'bird', having been the most ancient emblems of these two races, which founded the ancient Mediterranean civilization in Crete and Taman Peninsula, the civilization which preceded the Aryan civilization in Greece and Italy, Germany, U. K. and in Ireland, and also in Assyria, Mesopotamia, in Asia Minor and in South India.

LINGUISTIC GEOGRAPHY.

The geographical place-names based on the totemestic emblems are as follows :

Fish — ' Dace '. The term Dasus is derived from the term ' Dace ' the name of fresh waterfish found in Central Europe. The emblem of the Tamils or Pandyas in South India is Fish. The place-names derived from, Dace or Fish is Dacia, Dagestan, Dagan or South India, and Dacca in Orissa in North Eastern India.

Sheep — Lim (Sumerian) Source of wool, the modern Tamil word for sheep is " Cemmari " and from this root is derived Cimbric or Cimmerian tribes. Cymri is the Welsh name

for Wales. Tamil word "Cemmari" is a transformation of 'Kem' — Red, 'Lim' — Sheep, and Kemli — a Tamil word for — woolen blanket according to N. Swami Gnanaprakasar.

Limyrikê — Is one of the three Divisions of Dravidian India in ancient times according to Ptolemy, the Greek Geographer. This term is derived from 'Lim' meaning Ram or Sheep. There is also a county in Ireland by this name called Limerick noted for textile products. Thus it will be seen that place names like Limerick in Ireland, and Cymri for Wales and Limyra in Asia Minor are connected with Limyrikê of Ancient South India, another name for the Tamil country. Langdon in Vol. V. of *Mythology of all races* shows the place-name Jerusalem as made up of three components: Uru, sa, lim and was known as Salem in 1500 B. C. There is a Tamil city by this name Salem in Madras State. The Tamil word 'Kemli' meaning woolen blanket is derived from 'Lim' meaning sheep in Sumerian, as shown above.

Goat — Sheep called 'Addu' in Tamil, and place-name derived from this are, Adana a town in Turkey, Adalia, a sea port in Turkey in the Gulf of Adalia, Adad for Alappo in Mesopotamia, Adowa a town in Abyssinia, Attica in Greece, Aden in South West Arabia, Atali Desa and Attur in Salem District and Atti-tondu in Tinnevelly District in South India.

'Cemmari', 'Lim' and 'Addu' are thus equated: Limyra is an ancient town of Lycia in Asia Minor the seat of the Eastern Pelasgians or Hittites. According to Ptolemy, two places bore the names of Adisdara and Adeisathra in ancient India, South India. The ancient name for the River Euphrates is Nar-pur-Attu. The shepherd is known 'Akkan' Sumerian name from which Akkadian is derived or Kuru. The title for Cera or Kerala Kings is Athan or Akkan or Occan. Malabar was now known as Akkam.

'Ti' or 'Di'. In Tamil means fire or light and is the emblem of Sideriving its name from 'Sack' a 'bag' standing also for 'trade' culi or the Sakyan tribe. The place-names derived from the root *Ti* are the River Tiber in Italy, Tigris in

Mesopotamia, Thebes, an ancient City in Greece, Thebes an ancient City of Upper Nile, Tyndis, a seaport of Limerycke of South India, Tiryns an ancient city in Peloponese. Thirayans are the title of Chola Kings of Sigarakuli or clan. Caldwell identifies Limericka with Dimirica as one of the three Divisions referred to above of which Tyndis is a seaport.

Birds. These have been the emblems of the Anatolian Race. Birds commonly represented have been the Eagle, Hawk, Vulture, or kite Crane and domestic birds like Fowl, Peacock etc. The cock has played an important role in Greek and Dravidian traditions in South India. According to Caldwell, KORI Koli means in Tamil domestic Fowl, cock or hen. Kukkuta is a Sanskrit term derived from Kori. In Kanarese it is Koli, Tuli Kori, Telugu Kodi. Gond-kor (from Ku or Ku) to call to cry as a bird 'Kural' and Kuyil, Tamil word for the Cuckoo — in Voyel, it is Kore, Ostiek Korek, Kurak, Permian Korech Kuryg or Kuraga.

The place-names derived from this word Kori are Khorasan, a place in the North East area of the Iranian Plateau, Kirkuk on Eastern Tugris Kharkov in Southern Russia, Kerch or Kerchli in Switzerland, Korinth or Corinth in Greece, Koromandal Coast, seat of the Cholas, and Korkai ancient seat of the Pandyas in Tirunelveli District, Karel (Quilon) in the Travancore District, and Kurrukuthurai near Tiruchinopoly, Koli the seat of the Cholas. Kory or Kolis is the name by which Pomponias Mela and Dionysios Pereigatis designate South India. Ptolemy, like the author Periples, regarded Cape Korey as the most important projection of India towards the South. All these geographical place-names are interlinked with South India.

Sufficient evidence on the basis of linguistic Geography and on other grounds has been adduced to identify the Dravidians with the Libyans. We have now to deal with the question as to when there was an immigration of these types into India. H. R. Hall in his *Ancient History of the Near East* refers to the seething turmoil of migrations, expulsions and war in the Eastern Mediterranean in the 12th and 13th

Century B. C. caused by the great Thessalian invasion and the attacks made by the Aegean tribes on Egypt. These tribes were known as the 'Peoples of the Sea' and are mentioned as Pulesatha (Pulesti), Tjakarai, Danauna and Washasha. Hall considers these tribes as dis-possessed Cretans. The Indian equivalents of these tribes according to my classification will be Pulesathi (Pulesti) as Pandya Tamil tribes (Ta, and Ta 2 tribes), Tjakarai from the place name Zakro in Crete can be equated with Chola, Sigarakuli or Si. I tribe, and Akaiwasha with Malayalee, and Canarese, and Danuana (Telugu) with Cera, as Li tribe, and Tyrsenians with Maravar (Si. 2 tribes). Hall states that the aim of these migrations was to find a permanent home, as they came with their women and children and all their belongings to Palestine, the coast of which was familiar to them for centuries, and I presume they were equally familiar at the time with the Western coast and Eastern coast of South India. I put forward the possibility of large migrations of these tribes in India, both by land and sea, as having taken place between 1600 and 1200 B. C.

These four components may be recognised in Crete —

Tribe.	*Seat.*	*Crete.*
Pulesathi (Ta I)	Idaen cave	Middle part.
Zackarai (Si. I)	Dictaean cave	Eastern part.
Kammarais (Li)	Kamarais cave	Middle part.
Phala Sarma (Ta 2)	Western portion of Crete	

The Aegean tribes, who founded the Mediterranean civilization in Crete in Taman Penninsula and Crimea in Syria and Palestine, in Asia Minor, in Assyria and Mesopotamia, and thence migrated to South India and Ceylon, are found to be made up of two race types, the Anatolian (Armenoid) and the Mediterranean type working in close association for over 3000 years. The only surviving relict of this ancient civilization is the Dravidian civilization in South India. The Anatolians were a sea-faring race, and their adventures started before 3000 B. C. and their home was in Asia Minor, and the

Mediterraneans had their cradle in the Nile Valley around 4000 B. C. The Anatolians came in contact with the Mediterranean Cretans or Minoans about 2000 B. C. as Myceniaus in the Island of Crete, and another meeting point was in Central Europe around the Danube region, and they occupied the Southern portion of Greece and the associated Islands in the Eastern Mediterranean, and the Taman Penninsula, in Southern Russia, till they were invaded by the Aryans.

The most remarkable thing is that these two races had lived together and worked together and at times were at war with each other for over 4000 years and they built civilizations in Egypt, in Crete, in Asia Minor, in South India and other centres of the Ancient World. From a biological stand-point the most striking feature is that they still retain their distinctive racial types in South India, owing to the pursuit of hereditary occupations on which their village communities are based from pre-historic times. The caste system has ensured the survival of these races and sub-race types by the prohibition of marriages between members of different tribes, even though they belong to the same race type, if they followed different hereditary occupations, signified by such caste titles as Pillais, Chettiars, Kammalars, and Nadars representing the Ta. 1, Si and Li, and Ta 2, components in the Tamil community. The Caste system insists on the marriage of the members of a caste or of an occupational group, on a hereditary basis, to marry within the caste or group, which custom explains the survivals of these distinctive race and sub-race types in Southern India.

In conclusion, I would propose the name of Indo-Aegeans for the Dravidian tribe of South India who have been equated with the Mediterranean and the Anatolian tribes, in contradistinction to Indo-Aryans.

The Tamahu tribes mainly consist of Fishing, Agriculture and Hunting tribes and the Lebu tribes were made up of

shepherd Trading and warring tribes. They formed confederacies on a totemestic basis. *

---

* In the preparation of this paper, I have referred to the following works :—

Human History (1930) by G. Elliot Smith. Travels and settlements of early man (1929) by T. S. Foster. Ancient History of the Near East (1920) by H. R. Hall. Aegean Archaeology (1915) by H. R. Hall. Tamil culture, April 1953 — Furer Haimendorf's article. Tamil culture, Jan. 1953 Nallur Swamy Ganaprakasar's article. Ptolemy's Ancient India (1885) by J. W. Mc. Crindle. Comparative Grammer of Dravidian languages (1851) by Caldwell. Origin and spread of Tamils (1947) by V. R. Dikshitar. Tamil India (1945) by M. S. Purnalingam Pillai. Tamils 1800 years ago (1904) Kanakasabai Pillai. Pre-Aryan Tamil culture (1929) by P. T. Srinivasa Iyengar. History of the Tamils by P. T. Srinivasa Iyengar. Castes and Tribes of South India (1909) by Edgar Thurston. Early History of Assyria (1928) by Sydney Smith. The Mediterranean race — A study of origin of European Peoples (1901) by G. Sergi. Ancient India Vol. I (1938) by T. L. Shah. Cambridge History of India Vol. 1 (1922). Guide to the Archaeological Galleries (1947) Madras Govt. Museum by F. H. Gravely. Abhidana Chintamani (1934) by Sivaprakasa Swamigal. European and other race origins (1916) by H. B. Hanney. Iranians and Greeks in Southern Russia (1922) by M. Rostoutzeff. Origins of agriculture by H. Peaks. Annual Report Survey of India 1902 — 1903.

Ancient Tamil Kings—Their High Ideals *

A. CHIDAMBARANATHA CHETTIAR, M.A., Ph.D.

WHEN one begins to talk about the Ancient Kings of the Tamil Country, one naturally thinks of the Kings that ruled the Countries of Chera, Chola and Pandya, nearly 1800 years ago. These kings are commonly called the Kings of the Sangam Age. Though there are certain scholars who would date the Sangam period as the 7th or 8th century A. D. or the 5th Century A. D., there is greater consensus of opinion in regard to fixing it as the early centuries of the Christian era.

The astronomical data in Cilappadikaram regarding the fire of Madura as worked out by Mr. K. G. Sesha Iyer, the absence of any mention of Pallavas in Sangam literature, Ptolemy's description of Musiri as a great emporium, the Gajabahu synchronism which is more kindly accepted nowadays by scholars such as Professor V. R. R. Dikshitar of the Madras University [1] and Professor R. Satyanatha Iyer of the Annamalai University [2] seem to point to the conclusion that the Sangam age was probably the period of the first three centuries of the Christian Era.

Until recently writers on Indian History paid scanty attention to the political and social history of South India. It must be admitted that an error was committed by disregarding evidence from Tamil literature regarding that hoary period. Historians such as Vincent Smith and writers such

* Paper presented by Dr. A. Chidambaranatha Chettiar, M.A., Ph.D., Professor of Tamil, Annamalai University, at the 17th All-India Oriental Conference, at Ahmedabad.

1 Origin and Spread of the Tamils by Prof. V. R. R. Dikshitar p. 38.

2 Indian History: by Prof. R. Satyanatha Iyer M.A., p. 156.

as Professor Sundaram Pillai deplored the omission to trace the history of South India in any well-written book on Indian History. It is gratifying, however, to note that Professor R. Satyanatha Iyer and Professor V. R. R. Dikshitar have not treated South India with any disdain.

I think it was late Professor P. T. S. Iyengar who said, "If Chronology is the eye of History, Ancient Indian History will have to be always blind." [3] His idea was that events and accounts of kings could not be given in a sequential order. This is true of South India also. Even though a peep into the age of the Sangam is possible, even though one can know what ideals inspired the kings of the Tamil Country of those days, to put the accounts of these kings in a chronological order has not been successful. A study therefore of early South Indian History is a study of individual personalities and achievements.

But from the materials available, it is possible to reconstruct the probable history of these kings and to show how they lived and had their being.

The sources of information generally are *Purananuru*, *Padirrupattu*, certain stanzas in *Agananuru* and *Cilappadikaram* etc., Evidence from these source should not be set aside, simply because they are from literature. Though epigraphical and numismatical evidence may be more reliable, literary evidence is not to be disregarded. If evidence from the Puranas and Ithihasas were set aside, the political history of North India would have been a blank, until the time of Asoka. [4]

Therefore, traditions as enshrined in literature have their own value. Poets must have recorded in their writings what they heard about men and things of their times. We cannot and should not dismiss every statement of theirs as a figment of their imagination, or mere sophistry.

---

[3] History of the Tamils by late Prof. P. T. S. Iyengar. p. LVI.

[4] For instance, the date of accession of Bimbisara as 543 B. C. is obtained from Puranic accounts. (Vide Political History of India by H. Ray Chaudhuri p. 116).

With these few preliminary remarks, let me say something on certain Ancient Kings of our land.

Imayavaramban Peruncheralathan, as mentioned in the second ten of *Padirrupattu* appears to have taken certain Greeks captives and appears to have conquered the northerners and implanted his emblem of the bow on the Himalayan ranges in token thereof.[5]

Senkuttuvan (the 5th in the series in *Padirrupattu*) conquered the Pandyas and the Cholas and was making use of their emblems also in the seals used by him.[6] He had cordial relationship with the Sathavahans, alluded to as 'Nurruvar Kannar' in *Cilappadikaram.*[7] He appears to have subjugated two Aryan kings by name Kanaka and Vijaya, sons of Balakumara, who spoke in disparaging terms of the kings of Tamil Nad.[8] Though the reference is not to Kanishka and Vasishka, here we should be charitable to grant that Ilanko adigal has recorded only what he had heard about his brother. Of course, this would have been more acceptable, if there were corroborative evidence from North Indian sources. But it is not always that people frankly admit in their writings or inscriptions that they were conquered by others.

Regarding Chenkuttuvan, it must be stated that he wanted to be loved and respected by his subjects. He was inspired by the ideal of righteous rule, for he said while taking a vow that if he did not arrange to bring the granite piece required for making the image of Kannagi carried on the heads of North Indian Kings, he would become an unrighteous king making his subjects quail under his authority[9] (Kudi Nadukkuruum Kolen akuga) . One might compare *Tirukkural* " Are not the tears, shed as a result of oppression, the weapons which destroy the prosperity of the king. "[10]

---

[5] Padigam of the Second Ten — Dr. Y. Swaminatha Iyer's edn. p. 23.
[6] Cilappadikaram — 25th Canto — ll. 171-173.
[7] ibid Canto 26 — ll. 148-149.
[8] ibid. Canto 26 ll. 158-159 ; Canto 27 — ll. 50-51.
[9] Cilappadikaram — Canto — 26 — ll. 13-18.
[10] Tirukkural St. 555.

Another Chera King, Cheraman Kuttuvan Kothai was always easily accessible to his subjects but was very dear and unapproachable to his enemies. It is said of him that he was to his enemies what a jungle full of tigers was to a herd of sheep.[11] This reminds one of the requirements of a king as expected in *Tirukkural*[12] which says "The world will extol the country of the king who is easily accessible and who avoids harsh words."

Yet another Chera, known as Kanaikal Irumporai, refused to take water from unkindly hands, as the supply of it was not compatible with his sense of honour.[13] When he was taken a captive and was thirsty, he could not brook the wild treatment given to him as a prisoner by his foes and would rather die than drink the water that came to him in an unbecoming way. This is illustrative of the Kural[14] according to which kings are expected not to swerve from virtue and to keep up their honour.

The Chola King Nalankilli was a mighty warrior himself. Though it is generally stated that Tamil kings had no imperialistic ideas, we find that this king thought occasionally in terms of imperialism. He was a composer of verses himself and in one of his verses[15] he has made it explicit that for a mighty man like him the kingdoms of other kings were just as trifling as a dry weed in a water-less tank. His soldiers were as much enamoured of war, as he, and if he were to give orders for a truce or peace owing to possible ill-omens they would be disappointed greatly.[16] But if they were asked to march to distant places through thick woods they would quite willingly do so. And Nalankilli himself liked very much to be with his soldiers in camp.

Though he was a man of such great valour, he had rectitude of conduct. He shunned the company of harlots and

---

11 Purananuru St. 55.
12 Tirukkural St. 386.
13 Purananuru St. 74.
14 Stanza 384.
15 Purananuru St. 75.
16 Purananuru St. 68.

was faithful to his wife. He said, "If any of my foes despises my prowess, he cannot escape from me, even as a blind fellow who stumbles upon a tiger can never escape. If I do not trample upon him and crush him to death, let me suffer the ignominy of having had union with harlots."[17] One might in this connection compare the king of the Brahmana period who had ordinarily four queens.[17-a]

Similar sentiments were expressed by a Pandya Talaiyalankanathu Ceru Venra Neduncheliyan on a similar occasion. He said "If I do not take my enemies captives together with their war-drums, let the people who live under my protection lose all protection and cry out "our king is cruel". Let them shed tears and pour reproach on me." This indicates in an indirect way how much regard he had for righteous conduct and proper rule. Tiruvalluvar said that the king whom people speak of as a tyrant will rapidly perish.[18] Then, his vow amounts to saying that he would die, if he did not win the battle.

He prized, besides, comradeship and parley with poets and scholars such as Mangudi Maruthan.[19] He was eager always to lend a helping hand to his subjects that sought his help. Truly, he answers to the description of a good king given in Tirukkural as "He is a light among kings who is endowed with liberality, grace, love of his subjects and a desire for just rule."[20]

He appears to have defeated in battle, in his early age, several of his enemies, including a Chola and a Chera. There are references to him as "Eluvar Nalvalam Kadantoy."[21]

This Neduncheliyan was aware of the need to dig tanks and wells for purposes of better irrigation. He made his name immortal by this means[22].

---

17 Purananuru St. 73.

17-a Vide Political History of India — by H. Raychaudri page 85.

18 Tirukkural — St. 564.

19 Purananuru St. 72.

20 Stanza 390.

21 E. g. Purananuru St. 76.

22 Purananuru 18.

Another Pandya, known as Ārya Padai Kadanta Neduncheliyan, has given a verse on the importance of learning.[23] This throws some light on the relationship between king and his subjects, for it states that the king would not summon to his Assembly for counsel the eldest person in each house but would be guided by the counsel only of the learned members of the family. As Tiruvalluvar says, "the prosperity of the ruler who does not consult his advisers but makes them the victims of his fury will dwindle."[24]

Another Neduncheliyan (probably unidentified), the hero extolled in Nedunalvadai by Nakkirar, had great concern for his wounded soldiers when they were in camp. During midnight, when a chill north wind was blowing he left his pavilion with a few attendants, while it was raining and went round making enquiries of the soldiers wounded in the previous day's fight.[25]

Butha Pandyan also expressed the view that if he did not take his enemies captives with their chariots, he might be called an unrighteous king who confided too much in an undeserving counseller. He said further "Let me be separated from my wife, if I do not win the battle ; let me be born again not in the Pandya line of kings ; let me lose the pleasure and the privilege of intellectual contact with my friends who are as dear to me as my very eyes."[26] Here one may compare Tiruvalluvar's words "The life of one with no social contact will be like the overflowing waters of a tank without a bund.[27]

The Pandyan King mentioned in the Madurai Kandam of *Cilappadikaram* was punishing the wicked and rewarding the good. But when he gave orders for the execution of Kovalan, because of the allegation that he had stolen the anklets of the queen, he had failed to render justice. Kannaki went up to him and proved that her husband was not guilty. The

---

23 Purananuru St. 183.

24 Stanza 568.

25 Vide ll. 172-188.

26 Purananuru St. 71.

27 Tirukkural Stanza 523.

King stung with shame and remorse fell down dead.[28] He thought that he should not live, for he was guilty of killing an innocent person. He did not think of any expiation. Such a voluntary punishment on himself saved the honour of his clan.[29]

These were some of the Kings of Ancient Tamil Nad, of whom we get accounts from ancient Tamil Literature.

---

28 Cilappadikaram Canto 20 — ll. 74-78.

29 ibid — 25th Canto — ll. 95-99.

A Pioneer Research Worker in Tamil Music

A. C. PAUL NADAR, B.A., B.L.

ABRAHAM Pandither was a man of dynamic personality and versatile genius. His career was one continuous romance of varied achievements coming one after another. His circumstances were unpromising ; his resources were slender and his educational equipment was slight. He however rose step by step by sheer industry and hard work. He started life as an elementary school master ; became rich as a physician and manufacturer of medicine ; and won a great reputation as an agriculturist. He tried his hand at painting, photography, soap-making, Engineering and handicraft. Though he touched life on many sides, it is for his outstanding contribution to the study of Carnatic music that he will be ever remembered. His researches have revealed new aspects of Tamil Culture.

He was born on the second of August 1859 in the small hamlet of Samburvadagarai not far from the famous Courtallam Falls in the Tirunelveli District. All that his grandfather Subramania Nadar owned was a tiny, little garden. Subramania Nadar sought the solace of Christianity after he had lost as many as eleven out of his thirteen children. Abraham's father Muthuswamy was a gardener in the Mission Bungalow at Surandai and as a gardener he displayed considerable taste and skill. His mother was a Bible woman of forceful character and keen understanding. The young Abraham passed his primary examination at Surandai and the special upper primary examination at Dindigul and became a teacher at the early age of fifteen in a mission school at Dindigul. As a school master, he worked hard and made the school popular. During leisure hours, he devoted himself to the study of music,

medicine and handicrafts. He contacted Karunanantha Rishi, a mystic living in the neighbouring Sruli hills. The Rishi taught him the secret of the famous Sanjeevi Pills which laid the foundation of his future material prosperity.

Later on, after his marriage he and his wife were employed in the Lady Napier's Girls School in the Fort area, Tanjore. He was in the most fashionable quarters of the town and had access to the best that Tanjore could offer by way of music, learning and general culture.

When he was about thirty years old, both husband and wife gave up their appointments and took to the work of physicians and makers of medicine. From a small beginning, Abraham rose to the position of an expert physician, thereafter known as Pandither. He prospered and became rich, his daily income rising to a thousand rupees a day at the zenith of his prosperity. Then he turned his attention to agriculture and worked hard to make his Karunanandar farm a model one. It attracted Governors, Collectors and many agricultural experts who visited it for studying his methods of agriculture.

All his activities were a reflection of the awakening in India of the new spirit in all spheres — national, social, economic, cultural and artistic produced by the impact of the West in the last quarter of the last century. Before he was thirty years of age the Tamil renaissance had started under the leadership of Prof. Sundaram Pillai, V. Swaminathier, Damodaram Pillai, V. P. Subramania Mudaliar and a host of others. Pandither's keen insight discerned the new trend in the air before it was realised by the public mind.

The last ten years of his life were entirely devoted to music. Nothing is known about the equipment and the competence of his violin tutor Sadayandi Asari at Dindigul. One thing, however, is certain that Abraham early recognised the greatness of his country's music and had a partiality for it in preference to the western music, mostly the Church music, which he learned from the missionaries. The written notation

for the western and Tamil musical systems gave him an opportunity for comparison and contrast which laid the foundation for his scientific study of music. It does not appear that he made any great progress in the study of Church music. But he took to the study of Tamil music with such assiduity that he quickly attained in it a proficiency sufficient to attract the girls of the Dancing Girl Community to seek his instruction. One of his pupils was the famous Dindigul Janaki, a musical star of the first magnitude, whose rendering of Tamil songs created the impression even in those days that Tamil songs, when properly sung, were in no way inferior to Telugu songs. At that time, Telugu had undisputed reputation as a language most suitable for Carnatic music. The great artists of the second quarter of the nineteenth century — Thiagaraja, Syama Sastri and Muthuswami Dikshitar, all of them residents of Tamil Nad — composed their musical pieces in Telugu as well as in Sanskrit. They captured the imagination of the cultured classes who all became devotees of Telugu. The joy of music became the possession of the cultured few. But the overwhelming mass of people did not and could not enjoy these marvellous works of art created by those master artists. The cleavage between the mass and the cultured few became as wide as the one between the English educated University men and the mass of people. The votaries of Telugu Sahitya persuaded themselves that Tamil was unsuitable for the higher music. Tamil songs were practically driven out of the Katcheris. Musical performances had no attraction for the mass of people. At this stage Dindigul Janaki's wonderful rendering of Tamil songs had a refreshing effect and encouraged the lovers of Tamil to think that Tamil was not after all so unsuitable as the lovers of Telugu pieces represented. This was a small beginning for the Tamil Isai movement.

When Pandither became a teacher at Tanjore, he resided within the Palace area. On one side there was Sahgeeta Mahal, the music hall of the Mahratta Rajas where all through the day and the major part of the night, there was good music. On the other side was the Ramasami Temple where poojah was held with music six times a day. In those days, Tanjore was the unrivalled centre of Carnatic music and one of the most

important musical centres of India. In the midst of such inspiring surroundings, Pandither's ear was trained by hearing the best in music which South India could offer. His discriminative faculty was developed to discern the basic difference of one Raga from another. It set him thinking to find out the principles which underlie and pervade all the Srutis and the method of constructing melodies out of the Srutis.

When he became rich, he engaged the best musical tutors for his children. Jagannatha Bhatgoswami was the first music tutor to be engaged. He was a good Veena player. Then came Venkatachalam Iyer, a Veena teacher and hereditary musician attached to the Palace. He was also a blood relation of the great Thiagaraja. Vocal music was taught by Samia Pillai who was in the tradition of Thiagaraja, his father being the immediate disciple of the great Sahitya Kartha. The last, but not the least was the renowned violin artist Panchapigesa Bhagavathar who was wellknown for the sweetness of his melody on the violin. While all these four taught the children veena, violin and vocal music, Pandither sat long hours with them in the study of the theory of the music.

With the help of the first mentioned three artists, he edited a collection of Tamil songs which he had composed on the model of the Telugu pieces, setting Tamil words to the notation. The book was very carefully edited, and it took nearly seven years for the printers, Messrs. Hoe & Co., of Madras to complete it. The publication was a demonstration that there could be Tamil Sahityams on Telugu models. Pandither felt that this was after all an imitation, and he longed for the day when he himself or any student of music could compose an original piece on the lines of the great artists mentioned above. He started his own press called "The Lawley Electric Printing Press" which he located in a handsome building and equipped with an up-to-date machinery for printing and binding, worked by a powerful electric Dynamo.

Besides the regular tutors above mentioned, he secured the services of the most distinguished artistes of the day such as, Muthiah Bagavathar of Arikesanallur, better known in

latter days under the title of "Gayakasikhamani", Seshanna, the Veena Expert of Mysore Palace and Venkataramadas, the Veena expert of Vijayanagar Samasthanam. Pandither was engaged frequently in the discussion of the theory of music with these experts. To his surprise he discovered that none among the artistes of the Carnatic music had any scientific knowledge of the subject, on its theoretical side. His questions were a source of embarassment and puzzle to these artistes. Indeed, Seshanna frankly admitted that there could be no answer to Pandither's questions and that in any case, none of his friends was competent to answer them and said that if Pandither persisted in pursuing his enquiry, it might end in his madness. But Pandither persisted in trying to find an answer to those questions, a few of which were :

What is the origin of Carnatic Music ? What is its authority ? How are Sruthis formed from Swarams ? What are the principles which underlie and pervade all the Sruthis ? What is the number of Sruthis ? How are Ragas constructed out of Swarams ? What is the basic principle of the difference between one Raga and another ? What is the 'Jeevasuram' for a Raga ? Can only a genius create a new Raga or is there a method by which a trained man could create a new one ? Is there a rule for composing new Keerthanams, Geethams, Varnams, Swarajathis etc ?

Before the year 1910, Pandither had discovered a new method for making Geethams, Keerthanams etc. Another great discovery was the method of ascertaining the 'Jeevaswaram' of any Raga. On the second visit of Seshanna to Tanjore, he was quite convinced of the value of the rules for making Keerthanams evolved by Pandither and appreciated them. He was amazed to find that Pandither had composed 700 Geethams, compositions for new ragas mostly with the help of his second wife Bakkiammal and partly with the help of his eldest daughter Mrs. Annapoorani Gnanasikhamoni, in accordance with the set of rules that he had formulated. Seshanna, Muthiah Bhagavather and Mr. H. P. Krishna Rao, the editor of the musical journal of those days and an ardent student of the science of music, accepted them unreservedly, in all humility.

Pandither was not satisfied with the mere knowledge of his discoveries ; he was most anxious to do propaganda for the benefit of all. Ordinary artistes were not so ready to accept what the experts had accepted. In order to convince a wider public, Pandither, founded on 14-12-1912, the Tanjore Sangeetha Vidhya Maha Sabha of which he was elected permanent president. Under the auspices of that association, he convened as many as seven musical conferences in the course of four or five years. Almost all the eminent musical artistes, scholars and public men of Tamil-nad took part in them. Papers on various aspects of Carnatic music, dealing with Swarams, Suruthis and ragas, were read and dicussions and demonstrations were held. These conferences proved important events in the development of the study of Carnatic music and stimulated public interest in it. They laid the foundations of the 'Great renaissance' of Indian music that has since swept over the country.

Pandither got into touch with the experts and students of North Indian music also. He corresponded with distinguished students of Hindustan music such as Bhatkhande of Bombay and Mr. Clements I. C. S., then District Judge of Dharwar, the author of a treatise on Hindustan Music. He availed himself of an invitation to attend the 'All India Music Conference' in Baroda convened by H. H. The Gaekwar and his talented Dewan Mr. V. P. Madhava Rao. Pandither attended the conference with his family and took part in the deliberations, and thereby laid the foundation for his all India fame as an exponent of scientific music.

In all the Music conferences whether at Tanjore or at Baroda, the main question that was debated, and in which Pandither was most interested, related to the number of Suruthis in an octave in Carnatic music. He threw himself heart and soul into that question with all his energy and resourcefulness. In this matter he came into clash with orthodoxy and time honoured tradition. Music, like all other sciences and arts in India, is religious. Any innovation is looked upon as a sacrilege. That is how the Indian mind tenaciously fights against any innovation however reasonable it may be.

Now, a Sanskrit text book on music — *Sangeeta Ratnakara* by Saranga Deva, a native of Kashmir, but residing at the court of Devagiri in the Maharashtra in the beginning of the 13th century, mentions twenty two suruthis. Tradition accepted this without enquiry into the truth of the statement. Pandither maintained that it was not scientifically correct and was not practicable and that twenty-four was the correct number. A fierce controversy ensued. It was a controversy which the general public could not intelligently follow. It was a battle between experts. The contest looked unequal: on one side, a Christian not in the tradition of Carnatic music, and on the other side, were ranged religion, orthodoxy, tradition and wealth of learning. Unequal though the contest was, Pandither came out triumphant. His genius flowered; there was nothing which his painstaking genius could not grasp or delve into, to find out the truth. Nothing but the conviction that he was in possession of the truth and that ignorance only opposed him, supported him in those days of the battle of suruthis not always carried on with equanimity and decorum. (Vide XX P. 864 Vol. I *Karunamirtha Sagaram* of Pandither.)

Pandither made research into the Tamil works long anterior to Saranga Deva's '*Sangeetha Rathnahara*'. In the edition of *Silapathikaram* published by Swaminathayyar with the two old available commentaries, he found an inexhaustible mine for his musical researches. With informations and suggestions scattered here and there, Pandither's genius recreated the past glory of ancient Tamil music submerged by ages.

The results of his researches are embodied in *Karunamirtha Sagaram,* Volume I published in 1917. It is a bulky volume of more than 2000 pages of half-size paper. The mere appearance of the book has scared away many. It contains a lot of materials — archaeological, historical, linguistic and scientific. It is however a treatise mainly on 'Isai Tamil' dealing with suruthis. The chief aim of the author is to show, what the music of the ancient Tamil Nad was and how modern Carnatic music is its counterpart. He proves by apt quotations from Tamil works how in the Ancient Tamil music the octave was divisible into a number of equal tones. This is his

fundamental position. The octave is not only divisible into twelve, but also into twenty four, forty eight and ninety six equal intervals, the series in all cases arising gradually by geometrical progression. He supports this theory by minute mathematical calculations, logarithms, decimals down to eight places, as regards length of string, number of vibrations, cents etc. He condemns the theory of 22 suruthis for the octave and says that its advocates altogether mis-interpret Saranga Deva, who if properly understood (according to Pandither), is not opposed to 24 suruthis.

Pandither constructed a Veena of his own to demonstrate his theory of suruthis. The demonstration was made on several occasions by Pandither's two daughters Mrs. Maragathavalli Durai Pandian and Mrs. Kanagavalli Navomoni. Both these talented ladies demonstrated it at the All India music Conference at Baroda in the presence of a galaxy of experts from all over India. Vynika Siromani Venkatramdas, Samasthana Vidwan of Vijayanagar one of those present at the demonstration at Baroda, wrote in a letter dated 17th May 1917 : "My joy reached its utmost limits when Keerthanams were sung where these 12, 24, 48 and 96 suruthis were used. These demonstrations are beyond the imagination of any Vidwan nor could they be sung by any. When Srimathi Maragathavalliammal and Kanagavalliammal sang Keerthanas in the minute suruthis, I was carried into the regions of ecstasy. I have seen many places from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin, and I have made the acquintance of many a musical expert. But I have not found any one to equal Srimathi Maragathavalliammal in musical ear. When the audience at Baroda listened to her singing, how she brought into prominence even the most insignificant suruthi, their joy knew no bounds. Many clapped hands out of sheer joy, spoke words of deep appreciation, and said that a new era had dawned for the musical world. I was lost in admiration when I witnessed all this novelty."

Scarcely had the first volume come out of the Printer's table, when Pandither started writing the second. He was already 58 years old. He had only two years to live. He began to work in right earnest at the second volume. His

health broke down under the stress of heavy work. The feeling of anxiety whether he would live to complete the work overcame him. Many friends deserted him on the publication of the first volume, as they felt that the theory of 24 suruthis expounded therein, was a sacrilege. The few that remained were doubtful of the value of the enquiry and research he was carrying on with single-minded devotion. Undismayed, he carried on the work in the belief that 50 years hence he would be appreciated by experts as well as by the general public. In spite of the physical weakness which confined him to bed, he dictated from his bed. To the last moment of his life, he was grappling with the problem of music with zeal worthy of Brownings' Grammarian : with this difference, Pandither's zeal was directed towards vital problems of music intended to delight, elevate and purify mankind. He entered into eternal rest on the 31st of August 1919.

The second volume was not altogether completed by Pandither. He had however printed whatever he wrote. He desired that his daughter Mrs. Maragathavalli Duraipandian should complete it. Twenty seven years later, in the beginning of the year 1946, the second volume was published, thanks to the energy and zeal of Pandither's eldest son Dr. A. Sundara Pandyan, the present proprietor of Lawley Electric Printing Press. It has an appreciative introduction by that ardent scholar and devotee of music, Mr. M. Anantha Narayanan M.A., I C. S., the District Judge of the Madras Judicial Service.

The second volume has only 352 pages of half size paper. It is a scientific treatise on the basic principles of Carnatic music, perhaps the only one of its kind. It has solutions for the very questions which Pandither himself posed to music experts in the beginning of his studies and research, such as :— How are Suruthis formed from Swarams ? What are the basic principles of Suruthis ? How are Ragas constructed from Suruthis ? What is the basic principle of difference between one Raga and another ? What is a Jeeva Swaram for Raga ? Can only a genius create a new Raga or is there a method by which

a trained man could create a new one? If so, are there rules for composing new Keerthanams, Geethams, Swarajathies, Varnams? Pandither discusses all these questions and answers them. He evolves rules and formulates methods for creating new pieces. In the opinion of competent men, the book reveals 'Divine Secrets' never before revealed.

It comes as an eye opener to those who have a contempt for Tamil as a vehicle for music. Pandither's researches embodied in both the volumes, establish beyond all doubt that the music miscalled Carnatic had really its origin in the Tamil language and attained its highest development in Tamil Nad. Only the nomenclature has been altered and the principle misunderstood. (Vide P. 42, Vol. II Part I of *Tamil Culture* for an article by A. A. Varagunapandiyan, the third son of Abraham Pandither on "The Genius of Tamil Music" and his book *Panar Kaivali Enapadum Yel Nool* (South Indian Saiva Sithantha Press, Tirunelveli).

The second volume has some of the original compositions of Mrs. Maragathavalli Durai Pandian in illustration of the theories and principles expounded therein. She has given 15 Keerthanams, 14 Geethams, 1 Varnam and 1 Swarajathi. They serve as specimens of Tamil Sahitia. They are not only in such wellknown ragas as Maya Malava Gowli, and Vachraganthi; but also in such rare ragas as Kanaganki and Bavapriya and in such new Ragas as Abirami (named after her father and Guru,) and Gnanapon (in memory of her mother) and Sundarangi (called after her eldest brother). All these pieces are analysed and explained with full notes necessary for the student of music.

The true value of Pandither's contribution to Carnatic music is yet to be realised. No doubt, we are passing through a period of musical revival. Great enthusiasm and mass activity have been engendered by the formation of large musical Sabhas and Academies. But we are yet to spread among the people true knowledge, intelligent discrimination and deep

appreciation. The spirit of the times requires greater refinement and richer development. Vidwans themselves are wholly given up to material success and have lost pursuit of the enduring values of music. They scarcely know how to cater to or elevate the popular taste. They complain that music cannot be made to order. To such Vidwans, Pandither's contribution comes as a great boon. *

---

* M. Abraham Pandither's Karunantha Sagaram on Surthis Book I Rs. 20-0-0

- do -	English Translation	Book I	20-0-0
"	on Ragas	Book II	15-0-0

are available with Dr. A. Soundra Pandyan, K. M. Hall Tanjore.

Kulatur, an Experience in Village Antiquity

LEOPOLD BAZOU

IF the research student meets with disappointment at times in the wide field of Dravidian culture, he is often rewarded in finding much more than he could have been bargaining, for Kulattur presents a typical case of such an unexpected reward. The place, some six miles north of Dindigul along the road to Eriyodu and Karur, is but a small, and, to the profane, insignificant village of some Palla families who are the field-menials to the few caste land-owners, Vellalas and Reddis. But Kulattur has a past, and a long one, that was not without glory. To the north-west of the village on the eastern bank of the river, there stands a large mound of earth, the remnants from a 'palaiyam' or mudfort that commanded the northern approach to the important fortress of Dindigul. Of the occupation by the Muslim troops of Hider Ali and Tippu Sultan in the second part of the XVIIIth century some evidence has been found, namely some small copper coins and a 10 pound cannon ball, unearthed from the surrounding fields.

But our concern was the Dravidian past. It was actually to meet the 'Mother' in one of her many forms, the Mother riding a horse, that we had come. We were soon to discover to our great satisfaction that the Mother's presence was felt everywhere as the ancestress of the Dravidian clans, with her symbols of fertility rites and the cult of ancestors that goes back here to prehistoric days.

*** LEOPOLD BAZOU is French by birth and long resident in Tamil Nad. His hobby is Dravidiana.**

The village stands on the eastern bank of the Sandanavardhini Nathi. We shall forgive it its rather long and pretentious name, for is it not redolent of the sweet 'Sandal-like Goddess Varudhini'? Though but one of the many mere seasonal brooks from the neighbouring Sirumalai and Ayalur hills, this 'feminine river' (Nathi) has for centuries brought fertility to the place and inspired various aspects of ancient Dravidian worship. The 'Riding Mother' one cannot miss. She stands in her recent structure of brick and chunnam in the ancestral form of Kottravai, the Dravidian victorious Mother, sword in hand, at the further end of the village, facing north wherefrom came the foe. But though a warrier, riding a horse under the title of 'Rasta Kaliyamman', she is still the traditional smiling benign Dravidian Mother, even if modernity had its say in the addition of a fine Rajapalayam dog by the side of the 'donee', a turbanned villager with coat and shoes plus a wrist-watch. The many hearths for the Puja in front of a small pagoda to the Mother attest that her worship is not a thing of the past, and the iron-cradles hung from a large banyan-tree are eloquent witnesses that she is still honoured as the ancestral goddess of fertility, the Dravidian Mother of the clan and of the village people. We need not wonder, therefore, why a small elephant in stone stands in front of her shrine as her mount. It belongs to the same concept and its presence by the side of the Mother seems to be as ancient as Dravidian iconography. But we soon found much more symbols and survivals of the ancient Dravidian cult.

In the fields west of the Riding Mother there stands a dilapidated small structure, the ruined walls of a former shrine surrounding a simple stone upon which the Mother is carved in a seating posture. Her waist is so slender that the slab has broken at the waistband, as if unequal to bear her bountiful breast, her high and large headdress that expands into a glorious aureola, and her four pairs of arms holding the symbols of her sovereignty. Here again, in spite of all her attributes of power and strength, she keeps her traditional attractive features, characterized by benevolence and benignity. She is the smiling Mother, the classical Dravidian Balamma, the 'Youthful Mother'.

Still among the same fields we find two other slabs with rude carvings, representing one man and the other two, each standing on one leg as if about to throw to the threatening foe the heavy stone held in the raised right hand. These hero-stones are not out-of-place here, almost at the foot of the ancient palaiyam and in the immediate neighbourhood of the Mother, whom they protect. There is still another hero-stone with an archer about to unbend his bow and let out the arrow, but this is almost in the village between a site of megalithic dolmens and new shrines to the Mother.

In the fields again, to the north of the slab representing the Mother, we visit an unpretentious pagoda-like small structure, the *Samadhi* or tomb of a local Reddi. Inside the narrow square cell with its door ajar, the stone slabs that form the flooring over the grave bear no name, no inscription, no sign of any kind to perpetuate the character and personality of this village worthy, some of whose grandsons we know rather intimately. There is nothing inside this otherwise uninspiring mausoleum besides a typical symbol — a Lingam over its Yōni pedestal. In the simplest and at the same time the most-telling manner, is expressed here the belief that death is not the last word. These symbols of creative energy over a tomb significantly emphasize the whole ancestral cult of the dead and the connected concept of fertility, the very fact that life endures beyond the grave as it perpetuates itself in the family. And this is not here mere fancy. The cult of the dead and the worship of ancestors are here alive everywhere, and they have, indeed, kept alive from prehistoric days.

There is in the village itself, within the Palla quarters, a modern small pagoda surmounted by the usual gaudily painted chunnam statuary. It would not be worth mentioning if it were not actually a shrine dedicated to a *Pattavar* — an ancestor. And this humble shrine is but a contemporary expression of an ancestral belief. Broken stone slabs, found here and there on the western side of the village near the river-bank, and other large stones rising from the ground into which their lower portion is deeply implanted, are without question relics from ancient dolmens. This cult survives again in the small

dolmen-like structures to be found in the Palla quarters, in front of the very houses that surround the shrine to the Pattavar. Such symbols, however varied they may be, are all inspired by the same concept. These miniature dolmens, that are not larger nor higher than a stone-seat, may look like so many hencoops ; they may occasionally be used for such a purpose, indeed, since in actual life the sacred and the profane are closely connected. But we know — and we have the assurance of the villages — that they stand as religious symbols, as so many altars upon which vows are made and oaths taken. Similar family dolmens are not uncommon among all classes of people in various parts of the country. Their size may at times not exceed one and a half feet in length like those we saw in the courtyard of Hindu Vanniars of Mullipadi, a village just a few miles to the east, and those built by children in their religious mood in the neighbourhood of the Chettiyammai shrine, north of Eriyodu. This Ammai is the protective female deity of a community of Chetties who dwell at Siluvattur some ten miles to the south.

The cult of the Mother must be deeply engrained into the souls of the Kulattur villagers. Not content with all the other exteriorizations, ancient and modern, of their veneration, they have of late raised three more shrines to her. The village Pujari to the Mother may be a Pallar, that is one from the field-menial class as it should, all, Vellalas and Reddiars, have contributed towards the expense of the buildings as they do contribute every year to that of the festival. If whatever concerns the Mother is the concern of the village community as a whole, her priest is usually taken from the field-menial class since it is the field-menials who know how to approach and deal with Mother Earth, the purveyor of all goods and of all life.

To make sure they would not leave out any important aspect of the Mother's many forms, they have dedicated each shrine to a particular characteristic, Lakshmi as the wife of Vishnu, Kali, the wife of Siva, and Sarasvathi, the daughter of Brahma. The chunnam statues that crown these three shrines that have been built one close to the other, include

various representations of the Mother and of her son, Murugan, who is shown both in his youthful and childlike aspects. On the slabs that form the lintels over the only opening to each shrine the Mother appears as she usually does, seated between two elephants with their trunk raised as a mark of honour. Two out of the three shrines have a couple of female attendants while the third one shows male guardians or Virans.

We might have felt some hesitation in attributing to former megalithic dolmens the ancient broken slabs that are still lying about the place in the immediate neighbourhood of the three shrines or used, as we have seen, in the erection of tiny dolmens as domestic altars in front of private houses. But past experience made us expect corroboration from further facts. Unmistakable dolmens slabs of the upper portion of which above ground had almost completely disappeared while the lower portion lie deep in the ground, to be found on the western part of the village, and the many laterite boulders we met along the road on our way back to Dindigul, confirmed our surmise. We had missed the boulders along the road or had attached little importance to them, though students of the Dravidian past ought to know better and keep always on the look-out for something to happen or at least to appear. These scattered boulders are but part of a rather large burial site that lies mainly to the north of the Sellammanadhi village, that is the 'Femine River of the Caressing Prosperous Mother', which is situated about halfway between Dindigul and Kulattur. Some of these stone circles are almost in perfect condition, showing still inside the rings of laterite boulders many debris of a kind of porous *sukkam* lime-stone and flint-stones, that in some remote century had been piled over the grave.

This large burial site has been unhappily disturbed in recent times. Scattered laterite boulders are to be found all over the place, along the road or in the fields. Many boulders have been removed to the further ends of particular plots of land so as to mark the field-boundaries. Some of the tombs have been excavated not so long ago and, sorry to say, not a few of them are being used now as manure pits! We were, anyhow, most thankful that so many of these stone circles have survived so many centuries for us to see.

Further investigations have broadened considerably for us the area of ancient burial sites in this particular tract of the country north of Dindigul, along the tributaries of the Godavanar river and on the bank of the Godavanar itself. Many are, indeed, the places in which are to be found ancient stone slabs that show all the signs of having been removed from megalithic dolmens. They have been broken into pieces to be used as basements to more recent shrines either to the Mother or her companion, the Aiyenar ; they have gone to erect small altars in the courtyards of houses in villages. Some of them have been put to profane uses like those black-stone slabs that form now two tubs in which the local Dhobhi soaks in water the village dirty clothes at Vaidesvaram near Eriyodu. We discovered several menhirs or raised stones, some small, not higher than four feet and belonging to a past that cannot be held as very ancient, and others as high as eight feet, rough, irregular and weather-stained by centuries of exposure.

We know of another burial site a few miles to the west of Sellammanadhi, near Malvarpatti, between Marambadi and the Dindigul-Vedasandur road, not far from the Godavanar and on the bank of one of his tributaries, the Varattar that brings the monsoon rain-water from the Ayalur Hills. It is usual enough, as is well-known, to find prehistoric burial sites near water-courses or tanks. We are told that a tomb was excavated some years back in a place west of Mullipadi, on the bank of the river that joins further on the Kulattur Sandanavardhini Nadhi. A large burial urn was actually unearthened. It is still kept in the house of the man to whom we owe the information.

Kottaiyur, at about the eighth mile north of Dindigul on the road to Vedasandur, is nothing now but an extensive mound of earth covering some twenty to thirty acres, on the west of the road and of the Godavanar. Here and there in the basements of the former mudwalls and at the shrine to the Aiyenar in the south-western corner of the fort-area, we found ancient slabs that foretold a burial site. This was not far to seek. On the western side of the fort, on a lower plane stands an extensive waste land with some rare brushwood shrubs and scattered

debris, slabs, flint-stones and sukkam stones. Here and there one notices just above the ground the lower portion of dolmen-slabs forming a regular square, and circles of boulders — regular or disturbed — complete with flint-stones and sukkam stones.

While we were going round the place four men were ploughing the land north of the Aiyenar shrine, and four small heaps of fresh feathers in front of the shrine told their own tale : one cock for each plough that had been sacrificed that very morning to this deity of fertility as an offering and supplication for a good harvest to come.

Proceeding further we met another burial site near the village of Puliyampatti north of the Vedasandur-Eriyodu road on a high waste land. Under an old and almost dying banyan-tree there stand two large ancient dolmens in perfect condition with a smaller and much more, recent one between the two. The place is marked also by several stone-beds made out of very sharp small stones pointing upwards...

Ancient burial sites are diversely known in Tamil. The most common appellation in the Pudukkottai country is one that we found ourselves reluctant at first to use until we were made aware it proved to be the best understood, *Kurangu Pattadai*, Monkey's workshop. The name must have, no doubt, some connection with the part played in the *Ramayana* by Hanuman in paving, so to say, the way with huge boulders over the Sethu or Ramesvaram strait. Another name is *Pandava Kuli*, which is an admitted corruption for *Panda Kuli* or urn pit. It simply recalls the fact that the Dravidians buried their dead in large urns which they deposited in tombs. *Mudumakshatti* or Old Man Urn is also known in Pudukkottai. *Kallarai* is used for stone-chamber burial. It has survived in Tamil, and a tomb is still called kallarai even if it is a mere pit. Here, in the country north of Dindigul, those ancient burial sites are collectively known as *Pandiya Vidu* or Pandiya dwelling.

But under their varied appellations these ancient burial sites have remained in the language of the people as clear sur-

vivals from an ancient almost forgotten past. Pandiya Kuli which is, as we have said, a corruption from *Panda Kuli* or urn pit, has its counterpart in the so-called *Pandava* caves, the natural cavern which in prehistoric days served as places of dwelling or shelter before they were actually used by the first Jain monks in Tamilagam. From Panda — to Pandava-Kuli there is but a little step to be taken. And so may be said as regards Pandava caves and Pandiya Vidu. Did not commentators of ancient Tamil poetry establish links connecting the Pandiya early princes of Tamilagam with the famous Pandava brothers of the Mahabharata? ....

The rich cultural and religious Dravidian past is not far to seek nor as difficult to find as one might imagine. The research field lies almost at one's doorstep, as near as the small dolmens that are still being erected in many a village and among many a class of people, both Tamilian — or Telugu-speaking, in Tamil Nad. Larger dolmens, though smaller in size than those of prehistoric days, are not uncommonly met near villages or in the open country. There is one such just outside Dindigul, along the railway line to Palni, about half-way between the level-crossing north of the burning ghat and the Angu Nagaram farm. There upon a mound of earth that has been left from the excavation work that went to make this part of the railway tract, stand the seven erected slabs, the top one lying at the foot of the mound. Further north, at the entrance of the village of Chettinayakkenpatti, there is a similar one. Near Ahtoor, on the way to Akkaraipatti beyond the river Godavanar, some ten miles south-west of Dindigul, there is one under a tree that is still held sacred. It bears the Saiva red and white stripes and is resorted to occasionally by a group of Telugu-speaking folk. And whenever we set out investigating we find still more similar dolmen-like structures, and raised stones too, some among them showing unmistakeable signs of antiquity.

Hindu burial places, either attached to burning ghats or situated in the village commons, present tombs with raised platforms of rude masonry work surmounted by a large stone slab in the traditional dolmen-shape. Times pass, things

change but ancient concepts prevail in spite of all, even if modified in the detail, even if their ancestral meaning has been lost. From prehistoric days the cult of ancestors has survived in its essentials. One's ancestors may be quite forgotten, or be still honoured as *Pattavars* — or *Pattavals* — when he or she has not been actually raised to the honours of the altars and acquired rank of village or group Mother or *Amman*, or that or Aiyenar. More times will pass, more things will be forgotten, and it may well happen that one day this village Amman or that Aiyenar will acquire such a fame as to become exalted above all the other Ammans and Aiyenars, and above all *Swamys*, and attract the worship of the people of a whole Nad or of a whole district as the 'Mistress of the Whole World' or as the 'True God in our Dark Age'.

Any lover of the Dravidian past, however inexperienced he may prove, can easily find by himself, provided he be patient and know how to keep his eye open, many such survivals from the cultural and religious past almost at his very door-step. Once his interest is awakened he will be rewarded beyond all expectation.

The Importance of Tamil Epigraphy

V. I. SUBRAMONIAM B.A., (Hons).

EPIGRAPHY occupies a singular place among the sources of History, for it controls to a certain extent all that we can learn from tradition, literature or art. Epigraphs were not inscribed professedly for the purpose of conveying historical information; on this very account they are trustworthy for their evidence is free from bias. Most inscriptions are contemporaneous with the events inscribed and memory has very little chance of intervening. In palm leaf manuscripts which are copied from one another there is room for errors in the transcription; epigraphs being permanent records have no room for such errors. Even among inscriptions on stones and inscriptions on copper plates, stone inscriptions are more dependable for they are exhibited publicly and are open to daily inspection. On the other hand copper plates like manuscripts are in the possession of individuals and hence provide occasions for forgery and interpolation by interested persons.

Without the aid of Epigraphy the chronology of Tamil kings and important events of the Tamil country would still remain conjectures. As C. Sivaramamurti says "The study of epigraphy, therefore, is a matter of vital importance. The inscriptions throw light on the life of sovereigns and the people over whom they ruled. Important incidents are recorded in them. Sometimes they supply or strengthen a weak link in accounts of dynasties known to us from other literary sources. They help us to locate the sites of ancient places by the geographical material recorded in them. They introduce us to institutions prevailing in the country at the time of their record. They supply us with a complete list of the designation of officers of state to whom different functions

were allocated. The prosperity of the country by sea-borne trade and privileges of merchant guilds are herein pictured. The religious faith, toleration or bigotry, endowments and charities for temples, monasteries, universities, etc., are recorded. Maintenance of charitable institutions, hospitals and colleges is herein mentioned:

The inscriptions furnish a good deal of information regarding weights and measures ; tables of measures can be made out by a study of the inscriptions where even the smallest measure is mentioned ; similarly also regarding the weights used for gold, silver, copper and other metals. Just as the measure, *drona,* was started by the Nandas '*Nandopakramam dronah.*', similarly some measures were started by Pallava and Cola kings. Sometimes they were named after the kings themselves like *Arumolidevan* after Rajaraja or *Videlvidugu* after Pallva Mahendravarman or more often after the gods like Daksināmeruvidangan and Ādavallān. From the inscriptions we get an insight into the price of articles to be compared with modern prices but it was mostly in terms of paddy, rice, pulse, ghee, oil, etc. "[1].

Tamil epigraphs are found not only within the limits of Tamil Nad but also in Kerala, Andhra Desa and Mysore, in Ceylon, Malaya and in Takua (*Foreign Notices* by K. A. N. Śastri P. 19).

Commonly copper and stones are used for incision. Hitherto no inscription is found in Tamilnad on bricks, silver or golden plates or on crystals or bones. The earliest available Tamil Inscription is the one on the Thirunathar Kuntru. On paleographical grounds it is generally accepted to belong to the 3rd century A. D. Inscriptions written in Dravidic Brahmi script in the caves of the Southern Districts of Tamil Nad are still earlier in point of time. They are not yet deciphered satisfactorily. But scholars like K. V. Subramonia Iyer read them as Tamil and assign them to the pre-Asoka period. Others read them as Prakrit. The earliest datable

[1] C. Sivaramamurti, Indian *Epigraphy and South Indian scripts,* pp. 1-2, Madras, 1952.

inscription is that of Mahendravarman (615-630) at Vallam in Chingleput Taluq : It merely records the titles of the king on two pillars (S. I. I. Vol. 2 pt. 3).

Only from the 8th century A. D. onwards the practice of recording the date gained currency. Generally the Saka era is adopted. The second popular one is the Kali era. A few Inscriptions are dated in the Vikrama era. In the West Coast the Malabar or Kollam era is very common.

Three kinds of scripts are used in the Tamil Epigraphs. The grantha script is used only for writing Sanskrit words or syllables — to write Tamil Vatteluthu and Tamil grantha Scripts are used. The earliest available Inscription written in the Grantha Tamil dates back to the 7th century A. D. and the Vatteluthu Inscription from the 8th century. There is evidence to show that Vatteluthu script was in vogue throughout Tamil Nad. When the Pallavas dominated the Tamil country they popularised the grantha Tamil script. Later when the Pallava supremacy was displaced by that of the Cholas, they also adopted the same script used by the Pallavas, As a result Vatteluthu was in use only in the Pandya and Chera country. Even in the Pandya country after a few centuries of precarious existence the Vatteluthu fell into disuse. When the Malayalis began to use the modern Arya eluthu script, Vatteluthu was finally discarded in Malabar also. The difficulty in reading this cursive script and the failure of political powers to back its usage were the immediate causes for its falling into desuetude.[2]

Most of the Epigraphs are donative in character. They may be about the grant of cows, or about an endowment to light a few lamps in the temple, for chanting the Vedas or for the recitation of *Thevaram* or *Thiruvaymoli* verses, or of a donation of land and money to Brahmins, or of a gift of a dancing girl to a temple (M. E. R. 36/1911). Gifts to hospitals which were called Athulàrsalai (ஆதுலர்சாலை) and to Sanskrit colleges are numberless. A few records mention gift

[2] A C. BURNELL, Elements of South Indian Palaeography, 2ed, pp. 33 ff, London, 1878.

to dancers and actors. And yet a few register agreements of Sabhas or lay down rules and regulations for the administration of the Village Assemblies. Memorials to heroes recording their deeds of bravery are not rare. Declarations of women before committing Sathee are also found. A handful of Inscriptions are about the settlements of caste disputes (M. E. R. 479 of 1908) and about the trial by a red hot plough-share.

There are one or two records which give a glimpse of the criminal administration of mediaeval times. One belonging to the reign of Jatavarman Sundara Pandya III (1306) mentions about a number of Brahmins and Vellalas giving up the callings of their castes and becoming high-way robbers at Tirukaccur. They murdered the Brahmins or cut off their ears and insulted the Brahmin ladies. They also committed robbery, got the ownership of properties by force and sold them. The offenders were rounded up, beaten, fined and were in imprisoned : but they did not mend their ways. The people complained to Pottappi Rayar who was in charge of the country and he sent a chief named Valluva Nattalvan (*வள்ளுவ நாடாள்வான்*) with a band of Malayalam soldiers to aid him. Many criminals escaped to the hills and even succeeded in rescuing a few who had been already caught by the soldier chief. The king ordered the confiscation and sale of their lands. Of the proceeds the major portion was paid into the treasury in lieu of the fines and the remaining amount presented to the temple in the names of the criminals. (M. E. R. 315 of 1909)

A record at Attur Taluq in Salem District is about a political pact between four chiefs who vow not to quarrel among themselves (435 of 1913 M. E. R.). Nishidikas of Jaina teachers having their names and vows are also frequently found in the Tamil land.

Early Tamil Inscriptions are short and their contents do not exceed a few lines. Later they become lengthy. The auspicious symbols 'Swasti Sri' which are invariably affixed to the later Inscriptions do not find a place in the early ones.

Some begin abruptly and some only with 'Sri'. The auspicious symbol is followed in the copper plates by a *prasasti* which may be either in Sanskrit or in Tamil or in both. The Tamil prasasti of the Velvikkudi grant of Parantaka Nedunjadaiyan is the earliest of its kind (8th century A. D.). The *meykkirtti* of the stone records are popular from the days of Parantaka Chola; (9th Century A. D.) The *meykkirtti* records the exploits of the king almost chronologically. Later *meykkirittis* are composed by court poets and added to every royal and private inscription. The *prasastis* and *meykkirittis* are not free from self-adulation and exaggeration. The former particularly abounds with them. Mythological kings and the deeds of the fore-fathers of a king have also found a place in both. Yet for historical purposes the meykkirtti is more dependable than the prasasti.

At the end of the *prasasti* or *meykkirtti* the name of the king is incised with the year of his reign, the day and the position of the stars at the time of the grant. In the absence of the king's name and the regnal year, this astronomical detail gives a clue to reckon the date of the record : this clue in many cases has proved to be true and Sri L. D. Swamikkannu Pillai's '*Indian Ephermeris*' aids us much in reckoning the dates according to the astronomical details.

This introduction is followed by the purpose of the grant and the donation of land or money. Finally the Epigraphs end with a request to posterity for protecting the grant or charity. The common form of such request is that 'the feet of these who protected the charity shall be on my head'. *(இத்தன்மம் காத்தார் அடி என் தலை மேலன)* It may sometimes be joined with the threat that those who failed to observe the conditions of the bequest incur the sin committed by all people living between the Ganges in the North and Kumari in the South, or incur the sin of slaughtering a thousand cows on the banks of the Ganges or have the shame of having their mothers as their wives. These declarations end with a curse that "anyone violating it shall bear the shoes and betel bags both to his kinsmen and to his enemies" (M. E. R. 435 of 1913). This is the form adopted in a good number of Epigraphs.

The body of the *Inscriptions* is generally in prose though the *Meykkirtti* or *Prasasti* is in verse or in rhymed prose. The language of the inscriptions like the language of the legal documents is conventional and involved. Punctuation is rare. Marking the dots for consonants are also rare. The absence of dots and the punctuation in the Epigraphs enhance the difficulty in reading them. If the scribes are learned, the mistakes in transcription are few. If the mistakes are persistent and regular then they have to be treated as the linguistic peculiarity of the age.

In the Anbil plates of Sundara Chola there is interesting information about the making of a grant. If a grant is to be made, permission is to be obtained from the king. The man who makes the request is called Vignapathi (விக்ஞாபதி) and the man who executes the grant after the king has ordered it is an Anathi (ஆணத்தி) or executor. The letter bearing the royal order is to be received by the people of the village assembled with folded hands. The letter shall be borne on the head and then taken out and read. If the royal order is a grant of land, a female elephant is to be let loose to circumambulate in order to fix the boundaries. After the boundary is fixed a record of these is to be incised on a stone or copper plate or on both with the seal of the king and with the signature of the writers and those connected with the document. A palm leaf copy of the inscription was to be sent to the king's archives.

The Tamil epigraphs are of great value in reconstructing the ancient geography of Tamil Nad and in identifying ancient place names. They are equally valuable in reviewing the social conditions of Tamil Nad in the past. For instance the practice of self-sacrifice of human life for varied purposes is spoken of in a good number of inscriptions. The 'Tamil and Sanskrit Inscriptions' (No. 24, Page 100) describes the death of a temple servant who threw himself from the tower of the Madurai Temple as a protest against unfair collection of tax from some tax-free villagers. This incident happened during the time of Chocknatha Nayak and consequently the village officials forthwith abandoned the collection of tax. Another inscription of 1768 A. D. speaks about a similar incident during

the Muslim rule. An European Regiment invaded Madurai, destroyed the temples, seized the town and was advancing further. Kutti, son of Vairavi Muthukaruppan at the request of the temple Manager and local people threw himself down from the tower of the Tirupparamkunram Temple in order to stop the enemy from further progress. The grateful people, as a reward, gave his descendants some lands and shares in the temple offerings. They undertook even to pay the taxes on the endowed lands. (Tamil and Sanskrit Inscriptions No. 28). Yet in another inscription this practice of self-sacrifice is mentioned in connection with the completion of a mandapam (M. E. R. 119/1906). This superstitious belief led a Vijayanagara king to slaughter 60 convicts for the construction of an irrigational canal.

Equally helpful are the Epigraphs to reconstruct the economic condition of Tamil Nad. An Inscription of Raja Raja Deva III, for instance, enumerates all items of village revenue. They are divided into two heads.

(i) Nellāyam *(நெல்லாயம்)* i. e. in kind and

(ii) Kāsayām *(காசாயம்)* i. e. in cash.

Under the first head are noted pāti kāval *(பாடி காவல்)* Cilvari *(சில்வரி)* Etuthukotti *(எடுத்துக்கொட்டி)* Arimukkai *(அரிமுக்கை)* etc.

Under the second head are included Kārtikai Airisi *(கார்த்திகை அரிசி)*, Kārtikaikkāsu *(கார்த்திகைக் காசு)*, Kārtikaippaccai *(கார்த்திகைப் பச்சை)*, Vēlippayaru *(வேலிப் பயறு)*, Nīrnilakkasu *(நீர் நிலைக்காசு)*, Thari irai *(தறி இறை)* Kadai irai *(கடை இறை)*, Kālakathappattam *(காலகதப் பாட்டம்)*, Thattārappatam *(தட்டாரப் பாட்டம்)*, Asuvakkadamai *(அசுவக் கடமை)*, Cekkukkadamai *(செக்குக் கடமை)*, Erimin Kasu *(ஏரி மீன் காசு)*, Inavari *(இநவரி)*, Pattōlaikkāsu *(பட்டோலைக் காசு)* etc. (M. E. R. 74/75 of 1887).

The implications of many of the taxes are not clear. However, the incidence of taxation must have been heavy as shown by the number of taxes, too numerous for a period when State responsibility was limited.

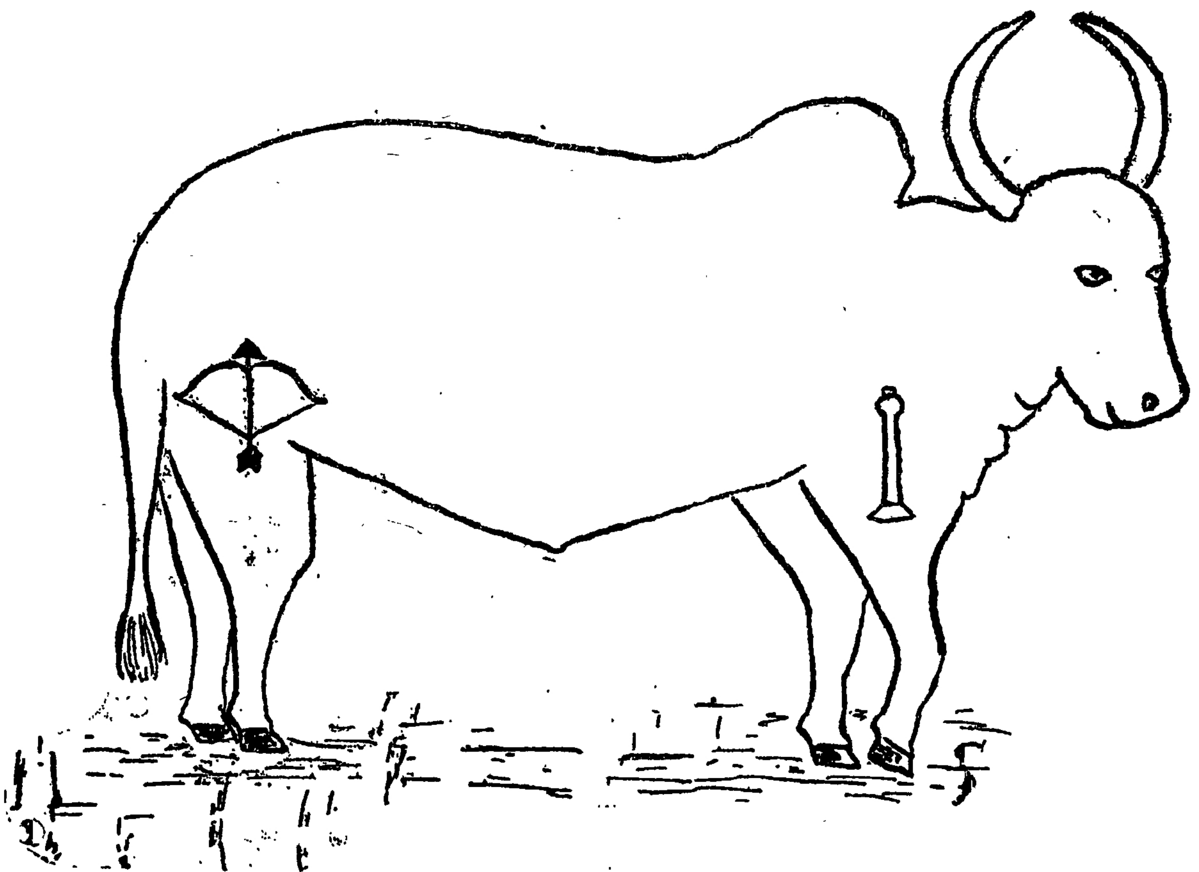
The neglect of Tamil Epigraphy by Linguists, is sad indeed. Linguists of Tamil Nad confine themselves to literature. The language of literature is refined, embellished and archaic. The changes that occur in the day to day speech seldom find a place in literature. The Linguist who is content with the study of literary language is like a Zoologist satisfied with the analysis of an old fossil of a living specimen. In a scientific study of language the living speech should form the main basis of investigation. The language of the Epigraphs is not literary Tamil. Nor is it very colloquial. It can be considered as the standardised spoken tongue of the day with minor dialectical peculiarities of the place where the epigraphs were incised. How far the Epigraphs can aid a linguist may be proved with the help of *Veera Soliyam,* an eleventh century Grammar. It states that diphthong ai *(ஐ)* and au *(ஔ)* are pronounced not as a single sound but as two sounds as ay *(அய்)* and av *(அவ்)*. Evidence for this practice is little in contemporary literature but is plentiful in the Epigraphs. The question whether old Tamil had both sonants and surds, or surds alone, can also be successfully answered if the epigraphs are phonetically studied.

To write the history of the Tamil language and to settle the chronology of the undated Tamil works, the language of the Epigraphs can be of great utility. This was foreseen by Prof. P. S. Sundaram Pillai, pioneer in the field of Epigraphy in Travancore, and by Shri K. Venkayya.

Epigraphs are priceless guides in giving the exact interpretation of words that occur in literary works. In *Kalingattu parani* for example, the word Vēlam *(வேளம்)* occurs in *Velam puku madavir kadai Thiramine* (stanza 40, kadai Thirappu). An annotator thought that the word should mean an elephant and corrected it as Velam *(வேழம்)* without knowing the real meaning of it. The correction was indeed a mistake. The work Velam *(வேளம்)* is often found in Epigraphs where it refers to a private house where the wives of vanquished kings are kept.

A North Arcot record belonging to the 13th century, gives a clue to the date of Meykanda Deva, the author of Sivagnana Bodham and thus becomes important to the history of Tamil Literature. A stanza of Thevaram the Thiruvidaivāyl Thevaram — hitherto unknown is brought to light by an Inscription. In Trichy on the walls of the rock-cut caves an Anthathi running into 104 stanzas is found inscribed. "But for the Epigraphs nearly a hundred poets and more than two thousand poetic pieces would not have been known to us", writes Shri M. Ragava Iyengar in his *Thamil Sāsanankkavikal.*

Tamil epigraphy is yet a rich field for study, and it is hoped that this article will stimulate interest in epigraphy even among the lay readers.



Note the Cattle brand-marks of bow and arrow and bugle

The Sociology of Jaffna— The Nalaver and The Koviar

* M. D. RAGHAVAN

AN unexplored field lies before the inquiring student of society and culture, in the cattle brand marks of Ceylon. In these cryptic symbols stamped on the animal are revealed social origins and functions otherwise obscure. The marks illustrated are the cattle brands of the Nalaver of Jaffna — the bow and arrow on the hind quarters and the bugle on the forepart. The Mukkuver have the mark of the chank; the Karaya, the boat; the Potter, the pot; the Pallas, the plough; the Parayer, the drum; the Dhoby, the cloth bundle and the Barber, the pair of scissors. The Vellaler and the Koviar have the same cattle brand mark, a standing brass lamp, a mammoty (spade) and Arukal Vathurai, the six spoked chakra (wheel). These symbols stand out as the very badge of the groups. The bow and the arrow — *ampum villum,* and the bugle of the Nalaver recall the tradition that they were the bowmen in the army of the Tamil Kings. The bugle is the *virutu kuzhal* or *virutu kalam,* the sounding of which calls the troops to battle or announces victory in the battle field. Story goes that they once showed the white feather in the face of an advancing enemy and retreated. This earned for them the scarcely complimentary name *Naluvinaver* the men who withdrew. Bow and arrow and the bowmen have been a feature of the armies of mediaeval days of all lands, vanishing under the changing conditions of later days. It is thus easily credible that in the normal course of events, the bowmen of the Tamil army would have lost their place in the rank and file of the army without engrafting the story of a withdrawal to account for the name. That they took to the

---

* M. D. Raghavan is retired Ethnologist and Assistant Director, National Museums of Ceylon.

cocoanut and the palmyrah for a living failing their martial role may also be understood, displacing the Shanars, the original climbers of the palms as they still are in South India. The Nalaver have ever since been the toddy drawers of Jaffna. This has occasioned another story spun round the "peculiar" mode of climbing trees, though it is hard to see wherein lies the peculiarity. As one watches the Nalaver going up the palm, it does not strike one as anything different from the South Indian mode or even of the rest of Ceylon. A third interpretation, is that of "shuffling" talkers, from *Naluwal* or evasive talking, implying that the words of a Nalava are shuffling or evasive. Yet another line of thought credits them as the original Malaver, functioning as soldiers. These many versions are an index to the interest the people have evoked. Amidst these varied versions the tradition that the Nalaver were the traditional bowmen of the Tamil army gains in credence, sustained by the objective symbolisms which their cattle bear branded on their haunches, symbolisms eloquent of their past functions, standing out conspicuously as the very badge of the tribes. As fighting men, they were reputed to be the Nambis who came to Ceylon with the early Tamil kings and in the retinue of the Vanniyars from South India who swarmed into Ceylon from about 100 A. D. The tradition finds mention in the Yalpana Vaipava Malai in these words :—

"Karaip-piddi-vanniyan resided temporarily at Kantharodai then called Odaikkurichchi. He had sixty Nambis in his pay who served him as his swordsmen. Having violated the chastity of a daughter of one of these Nambis, he fell by the hand of the girl's enraged father who took him by surprise while he was engaged in prayer. His Vannichchi not knowing what to do with herself ran out into an open plain and there stabbed herself to death. The murder of the Vanniyan was avenged by the hand of the law, but his wealth was transferred to the royal treasury. The remaining Nambis sent to Sanarak-kuppam, a neighbouring village, and, having no means of livelihood, hired themselves out to the Sanar and were trained by them in their hereditary occupation, namely, that of climbing the palmyra palm. From the circumstance of the Nambis

having thus degraded themselves they came to be called Naluvar, from naluvukirathu, to fall off, now corrupted into Nalavar; and these Nalavar have ever since taken to climbing as their caste occupation."[1]

More than any other single factor, what differentiated Jaffna Tamil society, was the institution of Kudimakkal, which held sway over the lives of the peoples regulating the inter-relation of the higher and lower groups functioning in a stratified social structure. Of the incidence of this system prior to the Thesawalamai code of 1796, nothing much is known. Codified for the first time by Claasz Isaacs at the instance of the Dutch Governor Simmons, the Kudimakkals of Jaffna figure in the code as the Koviar, Chiandos (Shanar), Paller and Nalaver. How far the Kudimakkal concept prevailed in early Tamil society to the extent that it is revealed to be in the Dutch times, we have no positive knowledge. That the Kudimakkal constitution was obviously not of a uniform pattern, but varied with the varying epochs, we may rightly conclude. Tolkappiyam speaks of the Parayer, the Paner, the Kadamber and the Tudiyar as the four Kudimakkal. The Portuguese and the Dutch were both interesting in fostering a system which suited their own needs, pressing into the service of the State every able bodied man, extracting labour largely from the reputedly lower classes functioning under the powerful land owning Vellalas. Of the four groups mentioned in the Thesawalamai, the Shanar have obviously had little of the slave in him, implied in the remarks[2] that they were "but few in number and such of this caste as were in slavery were not registered in the Thombo as Chiandos but under the denomination of cowias; so that the remaining part of them are free, and perform Government services in the same manner as the Bellalas and perform their ordinary Olian or Government services during one day every month." Shanar may thus be disregarded as one of the Kudimakkal group. The Pallas and Nalavas are stated to have been "slaves from their origin and remain so till the

---

[1] *BRITO — C*; 1879, Yalpana Vaipava Malai, p. 34.

[2] *MUTTUKRISHNA, HENRY F.*; 1862, A New Editon of the Thesawalamai, Section VIII, p. XXVI.

present time, unless any of their masters out of compassion happen to emancipate them which very seldom takes place." Both the Nalaver and the Paller seem to have taken jointly to the industry of the palmyra and cocoanut palms. Too numerous to be absorbed by this one and only avenue of employment, many obviously attached themselves to the Vellalas in the role of domestic slaves. The Kudimakkal concept in its essentials, corresponds to the essential functional equipment of early Tamil society with a plurality of interacting groups oriented to the socio-economic structure of the Tamils. These functions involved obligations on the one part and rights and privileges on the other. Their role in the society of the past and to a modified extent in the present has been of an institutionalised character with a differentiation of functions. Generally speaking the functional classes are to-day under the influence of forces which quicken a reorientation of social values. The Nalaver are no longer dependent solely on their traditional role of toddy tapping, employment in casual labour stepping up the economics of their life. Theirs is a free life promoting a growing sense of social independence, a free status out of tune with the Kudimakkal concept. And yet the past is still with the present animating their daily lives. He does his duty by himself and by the society. Nalaver women were the midwives of Jaffna in the past when there were no licensed midwives. Even today she has her role as the midwife in villages not served by licensed midwives, staying in the house of confinement attending on the mother and child. On the eleventh day she performs the ceremony of expelling the *Kothipai.* Placing the child in a winnow the woman sings its praises, after which the soiled stuff in the room is collected in the winnow and taken out with food stuffs, a young cocoanut and a lighted torch, and left in a gap in the hedge. This simple ritual safeguards the mother and child against evil influences.

The gods of a people often reveal something of their character. In the cult of the Annamar, the Nalavar have fostered a mode of worship peculiarly their own. A Nalava man performs the puja. Offerings to the Annamar are not food and drink, but wooden clubs about 2½ feet long, or the *gata.*

The traditions of this folk cult are for further study. That it is *prima facie* a warrior cult seems obvious. It is possibly reminiscent of the cult of the spirits of the ancestors or departed heroes.

The Nalaver have their own washerman, the Thurumber — a word possibly derived from the Malayalam word *tirumbuka,* to wash, — who are the washermen for the other lower groups also.

The Koviar enjoy a social status higher than the Nalavar. The comparatively higher position is implicit in the observations of the Thesawalamai code that "It would be a matter of great difficulty to find out that they were slaves from their own origin, though the greatest part of them are slaves at present". In the social life of the Vellaler, the Koviar has a large part to play. At Vellala marriages, he acts as the mediator. Both the bridegroom's and the bride's party repose confidence in the Kovia intermediary. Preliminary talks are carried on and the terms of the dowry considered and settled through him. In the marriage procession he holds the canopy over the bridegroom. As the bridegroom arrives at the bride's house, a Kovia woman performs the simple but essential ritual of Alathi waving a tray of lighted wicks before the bridegroom. This dispels the evil eye and everything evil. Kovia women prepare the Poothathalam, for the ceremonial rice feeding of the couple and a Kovia woman attends on them at the ceremonial feeding. In Vellala society when a girl attains age, a Kovia woman serves as her companion and helpmate through the period of her seclusion and the whole duration of the puberty ceremonies. Rasanayagam no doubt had these and other customs in mind when he summed up the social standing of the Koviar in the words that "their original status was equal to that of the Vellaler as can be inferred from certain customs which are still in vogue in Jaffna." Of the two tests of caste reciprocity, the higher castes have commensality with the Koviar, stopping short of connubium or inter-marriage.

Both the Nalaver and the Koviar give their services to the Vellaler at funerals. The Koviar take a leading part,

They bathe the body and carry it to the cremation grounds. The principal mourner who is to light the funeral pyre, walks under a canopy held by the Koviar. The Nalaver cut the firewood and prepare the funeral pyre. They head the funeral procession, carrying billhooks and mammoty, symbolic of agriculture in the life of the Vellaler. Notwithstanding these services it will not be right to designate the Nalaver and the Koviar as Kudimakkals of the Vellaler. At a Vellaler funeral on the eighth day of the funeral ceremonies, the Vannan, the Ambattan and the Parayer receive cash presents, the Kudimakkal kásu, and these sit for meals on the day in the same *panthi.* Nalaver do not as a rule eat at the house of the dead until after the 31st day ceremony.

The essentially functional services of the Nalaver and Koviar and their integration with the Tamil Social system precludes speculations of origin. And yet theories and suppositions have been rife. Thus Rasanayagam speaks of the Nalaver as remnants of the Sinhalese climbers who received the Tamil name on account of their way of climbing trees. That the socio-economic groups centering round the palms and their products, known under the several names in Ceylon, Travancore, Malabar and S. Kanara developed an affinity in culture, does not warrant our jumping to the conclusion that any section is a "remnant" of the other. Widespread migrations and diffusion of culture have been dynamic in the life of peoples of contiguous lands from the prehistoric to the middle ages, leaving in their wake a certain correspondence of traits and habits of life.

Of a piece with the handling of the Nalaver, has been the wielding of the Koviar problem. Turning historical incidents to suit his theory Rasanayagam pronounces his *obiter dictum* on the Koviar in the following words :—" After the massacre of the Christians, Sankili's insane fury longed for more victims and he fell upon the Buddhists of Jaffna who were all Sinhalese. He expelled them beyond the limits of the country and destroyed their places of worship. Most of them betook themselves to the Vannis and the Kandyan kingdom and those who were unable to do so became the slaves to the

Tamil chieftains and are now known as kovia, a caste peculiar to Jaffna. The term is no doubt a corruption of the Sinhalese word Goviya or Goiya and that their original status was equal to that of the Vellalas can be inferred from certain customs which are still in vogue in Jaffna."[1] If Koviar as a group emerged only from the time that they became enslaved to the Tamil chiefs, following Sankili's campaigns, they could not have been both slaves of the Vellaler and at the same time co-ordinate with them in status. If, as Rasanayagam admits, their original status was equal to that of the Vellaler, it would have been no less so in the later days judging from what it is to-day and from their present social functions and services. These customs obviously go back to early ages and go deep into the social structure of the Tamils. It little avails to fit the name to speculative derivations. And according to Rasanayagam there were no Koviar as such before Sankili's times, (early Sixteenth Century), but only Sinhalese Goigama, who as a group are distinct from Tamil Vellaler, between whom no question of status would arise. Others too have indulged in fanciful derivations at the expense of the Koviar. Thus the author of *Yalpana Vaipava Malai* theorises[2] that "the name is a corruption of the word Kovilar, i.e. slaves of the kovils, for these people had been originally servants of the temples, is a corruption of the word Kovilar, i.e. slaves of the temples, but afterwards through poverty sold themselves as slaves to temples. When the temples were destroyed by the Parangis, the temple-managers sold the Koviar to private purchasers as they had no occasion for their services. Sometime after this a number of poor but good caste people were brought from Vadathesam and sold here for slaves and they have acquired the name Vadasiraik Koviyam. As the slave trade increased gradually, the Government have taken it into their own hands in order to increase their revenue." If they were already servants of the temple, it is scarcely credible they would have sold themselves as slaves to the very temples which they served.

---

[1] *RASANAYAGAM* — Ancient-Jaffna — 1926. p. 382.
[2] *BRITTO C.* — Yalpana Vaipava Malai, 1879, p. 56—57.

Speculations apart, let us examine the philological derivation of the word Kovia a little closely. Goigama and Kovia are both traceable to the same root — go in Sanskrit, or " ko " in Tamil. " Go " or " Ko " means cow, cattle, and by extension has come to mean cultivation, intimately related as it is to cattle, Gopalar or Kovalar means herdsmen. A synonymous term for herdsmen is Kovinter. Gopiko is a farmer. Koviar may just as well be derived from the root " ko " as Goigama from " go ". Neither is a coruption of the other. Speculative derivations are a smoke screen to cloud the issues. That Koviar were the original herdsmen and served as such in the economy of the Tamils is the most sensible view that we can take of the group in the context of the Tamil social system of the early days when each group severally fulfilled its function to the community. That both have the same cattle brand mark to-day — the standing brass lamp, a mammoty and the arukal vatturai or the six-spoked wheel, goes to show that the Vellaler and the Koviar are associated units, two limbs of the same body. The same washerman serves the Koviar, Vellaler, Vanniar and Chettiars. The guardian god of the Koviar is Virapattira, whose vahanam is the dog, and a dog vahanam is the offering to the deity. To the herdsmen that the Koviar are, the dog is an appropriate symbol.

Besides the play on the word Kovia, that it is a corruption of the Sinhalese word Goviya or Goiya, Rasanayagam[1] speaks of what he considers as " the peculiar dress of Kovia women who wear the inner end of their cloth over the shoulder in a manner quite strange to the genuine Tamils ". The reference here to " the genuine Tamils " is hard to understand. Vellaler women too may occasionally be seen draped in the same manner as in Vadamarachi division, the end part of the sari wrapped over the breasts, tying a corner of the cloth either on the necklet or knotting a key or coins in the corner of the sari and throwing the end over the shoulder. No far-reaching conclusions can be drawn on a single trait of culture, which may very possibly be an instance of cultural diffusion, even assuming it to be a Sinhalese influence. Considering that it

[1] *RASANAYAGAM C.* Ancient-Jaffna — 1926 — page 384.

has had a wider vogue among the poorer classes even of the higher castes, it is more likely to have been a local development than an extraneous trait. Speaking on "the women's fashion of dressing their cloth across their breasts", does not Rasanayagam express the opinion that it is a custom introduced by the Malabar immigrants? Rasanayagam will be equally justified therefore to call them Malayalees, as to call them Singhalese. It is obvious no conclusion can be drawn turning round this trait. The story of early Jaffna has been a favourite topic of versifiers and composers of an age noted for its singers and poets. Most of these early compositions have been lost. A few have survived, reposing in certain families who treasure them as the very epics of groups of peoples in the Northern and Eastern Provinces. One of these early compositions is the *Vaiya Padal* by Vaiyapuri Aiyer, the court bard of King Sekharaja Sakera, singing the traditions of the early colonisation movements. Four of the verses are quoted below :—

வையாபுரி ஐயர் இயற்றிய வையா பாடல்

59 அங்கவன் வந்திவர்கள் தமை ஓடமீதிலன்புடனே யேற்றிக் கொண்டிலங்கை காணப், பொங்குகடல் மீது வரும் வேளைதன்னில் போரணிகொள் தேவி மாரிதத்தினோடு, திங்கள் முக நல்ல தேவன் சிறந்த சீரான சோபகிரி சுக்கிரீபன், அங்குசன் சிங்கத்தி மாப்பாணன் தற்பராயனரசன் செல்வக் கொடியோன் தேவன்.

60 தில்லை மூவாயிரவர் செட்டி வாணி
திசை கொண்டார் கூடலூர் சேர்ந்தவாழ்வார்
முல்லைநாட்டார் பரவர் முதன்மை பெற்ற
முக்கியர்கள் பறையர் விலைவாணர் மூவர்
கொல்லர் மதமறவர் நாவிதர் கோமட்டி
கோவியர் தச்சர் கன்னார் குடிகளாகச்
சொல்லு மூவாறு வகைச் சாதியோரும்
தொகை பெருந்தாதர் சங்கமரே தானும்.

61 குச்சிலியரகம்படியார் (கோத்திரத்தார்) கோவலர்கள் குயவர் கோபாலரானோர், நச்சுவிழி நாட்டியஞ் செய்வோர்கள் தானும் நாகநயினாதீவில் வாழுவோரும், மச்சமுறைகடலில் மாமுனைத்தீவாரும் வருணகுலத்தவர்கள் மலையகத்தார்தானும், அச்சிசமிருக்கும் சீலியரினோடே ஆரியவங்கிஷ மரையராயினோரும்.

62 மாளவர் ஓட்டியர் தொட்டி மங்கைமார்கள் மாகனகச
மசாடு பெற்றுவாழ்வோர், வாளுடைய வன்னியர்கள் மூவர்
வாணர் வாழ்வுபெறு வில்லவர்களாயினோர்கள் சூழ்வுறு தாளக்
காரர் மேளம் வாங்கா சொல்லரிய பேரிகை மற்றுள்ளநாதம்,
ஏழுபெருங்கடலும் மதிர்ந்திடவேயென்ன இயம்பிட மங்கையர்
களெழுந்தருளினாரே.

A rendering in English of the above stanzas faithfully to the original, is difficult. An approximate translation gives us the following :—

59. Meekaman voyaged over the rising waves to Lanka,
In the ship were the beautiful royal ladies,
Nallathevan, high ranking Sobagiri, Sukrivan, Ankusan,
Sinkathi Mapanan, Thatparayan arasan, Selvakodiyon Thevan,

60. Thillai muvayiravar, Chetti Vani, Thisaikondar,
People of Kudalur, Mullainattar, Paraver,
The original Mukiyar, Parayar, Vilaivanar, Muvar, Kollar,
Mata Maravar, Navitar, Komatti, Koviyar, Tachchar, Kannar,
Eighteen castes of kudies and numbers of Tatar sangamer.

61. Kuchiliyar, Akampadiyar, Kothirathar, Kovalarkal, Kuyar,
Kopalaranor, Dancers, people of Naga Nainativu and of
Manmunai tivu abounding in fish, people of Varunakula descent,
Malayakathar, Siliar of Achichamai, and Arya Vankisa Maraiyar.

62. Malaver, Oddiyar, Tottiyar women,
Sword-girt Vanniyer, Muver Vanar, powerful bowmen,
Flutists and cymbal players, drummers, players on vanka
And other reputed instruments, with splendour and pageantry
Resounding the seven seas, the ladies arrived.

The dynamism of the spirit of colonisation and the assorted character of the social factors embarking on a career of new life in a new land, cannot be more graphically conveyed than in these words of the poet. So far as the purpose of the present paper is concerned, the specific reference to Koviar is abundant evidence of their having been a constituent unit among the colonists from South India. The allusion to the omnipotent Villaver or the bow-men, testifies to the high place they filled in the Tamil social structure, at a stage in their life when the name Nalaver of later days had not evolved.

Among the interesting groups are those termed the Mullainattar, signifying peoples inhabiting Mullai tracts as defined in the *Chudamani Nikandu*. The physiographical classification of the Nikandu, groups lands into Mullai, Kurunchi, Neithal Marutham, and Palai. Mullai is jungle land, kurunchi the hill country, neithal, the sea coast ; marutham, paddy land ; and palai the dry land common to all classes. The Northern Peninsula was largely mullai land, more so in the early days. The constituent humanity of this type of soil, as given in Chapter 11 Makkalpeyarthokuti" — "Peyarppirivu", are thus enumerated :

முல்லையர் பொதுவரண்டர் முந்து கோவிந்தரேயான்
வல்லவர்குடவர் பாலர் மதித்தகோவலர் கோபாலர்
சொல்லியவமுதராயர் தொறுவரே யிடைய ரென்ப
முல்லையின் மாக்கள்பேர் தாமுந்நான்கு மொன்றுமாமே.

முல்லைநில மக்கள் பெயர்—முல்லையர், பொதுவர், அண்டர், கோவிந்தர், ஆன்வல்லவர், குடவர், பாலர், கோவலர், கோபாலர், அமுதர், ஆயர், தொறுவர், இடையர்.

Taken individually all the thirteen names are more or less synonymous, signifying the group of shepherds and herdsmen. Among the names are Kovalar, Kopalan, and Idaiyar. The term Kovalar would in time have lent itself to be turned into Kovilar falling into the error of fabricating an association with kovils or temples. The truth is, the root "ko" meaning the cow, has given rise to several group names, with the function of cattle-rearing as the common cultural factor. In fine therefore, a functional approach to the subject leaves the Koviar in no doubt as the herdsmen of the Tamils, the people tending the cattle, a function which is not altogether absent today, when the strictly functional structure of society is changing fast. In the village of Tunnalai as elsewhere, people who prepare and sell curds in the market are the Koviar.

These discussions should not blind us to an understanding of the economics of the groups, which varies from village to village. So far as the Nalaver are concerned, the economics of their life largely turns on tapping for toddy. The Tree Tax

system which obtains in Jaffna from 1937 abolishing taverns, has been the silver lining in the bleak lives of these people, giving them a certain measure of economic relief. The tapper sells the toddy direct from the tree to the consumer without passing through the toddy renters and tavern keepers, who elsewhere fatten on the labours of the tapper. Each man is licensed to tap twenty trees, and on the proceeds of each he makes a margin of profit. The opposition this has evoked reflects the conservative reaction, raising the cry of increased and widespread drunkenness, an allegation which is not borne out by facts or by observations on the spot. The condition is certainly better than what prevails under the obnoxious system of public taverns.

The present condition of the Koviar also presents a variable picture. Education is exercising its own levelling influence, advancing them socially and economically as seen in Weligamam West, North and South. Among them are proctors, doctors, Government officers and teachers. Elsewhere the social position remains largely static. Whether Nalaver or Koviar, no one who visits their villages can leave them without the feeling that their great need is land, land for housing relieving their crowded settlements and land for cultivation. Another of their great needs is freedom of worship, which they greatly deserve as children of the soil leading clean and honest lives. These are but a few of the many aspects of welfare planning, which calls for a co-ordinated approach educational, social and economic. The progress of a land is the progress of every element in its social structure.

The Problem of Ganapati

By

THE REV. H. HERAS, S. J.

A PROBLEM of divine filiation occurs in Hinduism which has not received due attention up to now : the existence of two sons of Siva in the mythological figures of Ganapati and Skanda.

I

THE SON OF GOD IN THE VEDA

The existence of one son of God is for the first time announced in the 10th *mandala* of the *Rgveda* :—

Ānit avātam svadhayā tat ekam
Tapasah tat mahinā ajāyata ekam[1] ;

which verses may be translated into English thus :—

"That breathless one by his own nature breathes ;
By his great thinking he generated one."

Some commentators of this passage are of opinion that *the* "one" mentioned in both these verses is one and the same person, thus the second verse would be an explanation of the generation of that one whose self-subsistence is proclaimed in the first. But this view cannot be maintained seriously, for in this very second verse two persons are clearly brought forward, one who generates and another who is generated and naturally the generated one cannot be the same as that who generates. In point of fact this generator is not generated at all, according to this text. He simply breathes, *ānit, i.e.* exists, and that by himself *svadhayā* without the intervention of any other person.

---

1 *Rgveda.*, X, 129, 3-4.

That this is the real meaning of this passage later vedic literature clearly evinces. The *Satapatha Brāhmana describes* more minutely this generation of the son of God in an unmistakable way : "He (God) loved (*akāmayata*) : 'that a second myself (*dvitīya ātma*) should be generated (*jāyeta*) from me.' (Consequently), as the fruit of his intellect (*manasā asanāyā*) the Word (*Vācam*) not spoken (*mithunan*) appeared".[2] In a parallel passage we read : "Prajāpati, the Lord of the whole creation, loved (*kāmayate*) : 'That I could be more than one ; that I could reproduce myself.' And then he made Brahman the first of all."[3]

These two passages leave no doubt as regards the difference between the generator and the generated ; they are two clearly different persons. What is the nature of the generated one ? The same as the nature of the generator. He is *dvitīya ātma*, "a second myself" ; a reproduction of the generator. A son generally resembles the father ; but in our case it is something more than a resemblance. It is equality, "a second Himself." That is the reason why this generated one is styled *rūpam*, an image, a reflexion[4] ; but this image and reflexion must not be a dead image or a dead reflexion, as is the image of a person reflected in a mirror, for in that case the generated would not be a second generator, absolutely like him. It must therefore be a living image and reflexion, for being the generator *Svayambhū*, life is the foundation of all his characteristics.

The generation described in these three passages is besides most extraordinary, for if we pay attention to the words we find that no woman or goddess is ever mentioned as a necessary counterpart of the generator. This after all is but natural ; for God is sexless (*alinga*).[5] The generation is therefore spiritual, as God is a pure spirit (*ātman*). Hence the

---

[2] *Satapatha Brāhmana*, X, 4, 5, 6.

[3] *Ibid.*, VI, 1, 1,8.

[4] *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upanisad*, I, 6, 3.

[5] *Maitri Upanisad*, VI, 35 (Hume, p. 449).

generation is done by the mind, by his great thinking, *tapasah tat mahinā,* as we read in the *Rgveda.* Consequently the generated one is called "the fruit of the intellect" (*manasā asanāyā*) in the *Brāhmana,* or simply *mānasa putra,* "son of the mind"[6], or *manobhuta* "generated in the mind"[7], or *tapaso jātam,* "generated by brooding"[8].

Though a spiritual generation, this generation is a real one, as all these texts clearly show, while using verbs coming from the two roots *jan,* "to be born, to be generated" and *bhu,* "to come into existence." Consequently the person generated is a real son, and as such he is called in the *Upanisads* : "God is a witness of the generation of his son"[9] ; and accordingly the son calls God his Father : "on the world's summit I bring forth the Father"[10]. After all we are used to speaking of our own literary productions as the children of our intellect, generated by us through thinking.

Thus finally this son of God receives the name of *Vāc,* that is 'the Word,' but as the *Satapatha Brāhmana* puts it, "the word not spoken." The Sanskrit word *mithunam* is thus translated by Dr. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy.[11] *Mithunam* in fact means something which is a necessary complement of another thing. Now the unspoken word, that is the mental thought, is the necessary complement of the spoken word, because without the former the latter cannot exist, while the former may exist, without the latter. "The mind (thought) is the earlier form, speech is the later form"[12]. When you pronounce a word a thought corresponding to that word has already been issued by your mind ; but if the word is not pronounced at all, your internal word, your thought, remains

---

6 *Visnu Purana,* II, 7.

7 *Mahābhārata,* Sānti Parva, 12005.

8 *Katha Upanisad,* II, 4, 6.

9 *Svetāsvatara, Upanisad,* V, 2.

10 *Rgveda,* X, 125, 7.

11 Coomaraswamy, *A New Approach to the Vedas,* p. 22.

12 *Aitareya Āranyaka,* III, 1, 1.

unmanifest. Such is God's Word, *Vāc,* internal, *avyakta.* That is the reason why it is said that "Prajāpati moves within the womb, invisible but evidently generated"[13]; and again : "He who is the unborn image (*ajasya rūpa*)."[14]

These are very high metaphysical conceptions which the human mind may hardly attain by itself, without the help of God Himself. This is one of those truths which must have been revealed by God Himself in the beginning of the history of man and which Indian *sruti* has diligently kept for the instruction of future generations. Some ancient Sumerian texts also speak of a similar conception among the Sumerians. They call it *enem,* which is translated as "word". It is the voice of the god Enlil, the creative word, the most important primitive source of the New Testament conception of the *lógos.*[15] Even our vedic *Vāc* has been rightly equated with the Alexandrian *lógos.*[16] In the same way in the Egyptian Triad, Thoot is supposed to be the son of Rā and is called "The God-word".[17] His eternal generation was well known to the Egyptians.[18]

II

THE GENERATION OF THE SON OF GOD

When did this generation of the Son of God take place. The *Katha Upanisad* says only that the generation was "very old," *pūrvam,*[19] or in the beginning.[20] The beginning of this generation is further specified by announcing that *Vāc* "was

---

13 *Atharvaveda,* X, 8, 13.

14 *Rgveda,* I, 164, 6.

15 Dürr, *Die Wertung des gottlichen Wortes in Alten Testament und die antiken Orient,* pp. 158-159.

16 Cf. Weber, "Vāc und lógos", *Indischen Studien,* IX, pp. 473-480.

17 Wallis Budge, *From Fetish to God,* p. 14.

18 Rougé, "Explication d'une inscription egyptienne prouvant que les anciens Egyptiens ont connu la generation eternelle du fils de Dieu", *Annales de Philosophie Chrétienne,* 1851.

19 *Katha Upanisad,* II, 4, 6.

20 *Ibid.,* IV, 6.

born from Brahma before the *devas.*"[21] That is to say; before the *devas* or angels were created,[22] the generation of *Vāc* was already a fact. The epic says that He is "the first who sprang into existence".[23] But this generation is not like the generation of other children. They were generated at a certain time and then the generation was over. The generation of *Vāc* never ends. "He is already generated, and He will be generated in future".[24] Origen explains this endless generation of the Word most beautifully. "The Word was not generated by the Father in a temporary manner, but He is continually being generated. He is the reflexion of the glory of the Father; now this reflexion is not generated by the light once and for all; and then stops being generated; for while the light shines, this light continually produces the reflexion. In a similar way the reflexion of the glory of God is being generated eternaly".[25]

The *Svetāsvatara Upanisad,* which is relatively one of the most recent among the thirteen principal *Upanisads,* contains nevertheless very old doctrine. We have already referred to the *Upanisad* several times explaining these high mysteries of the life of God. In connection with this generation of the Word the *Svetāsvatara* informs us of the wave of *ānanda* existing between the Father and the Son. "*Isāna* (the Lord) contemplated *Hiranyagarbha* (another name for *Vāc*) while he was being generated."[26] In this contemplation there could not but be much pleasure of the Father while seeing His Son. This pleasure is still revealed in a higher degree in another text, already partly quoted: "God is the witness of the generation of His Son, who is a seer

21 *Vajasaneyi Samhitā,* XXXI, 20; *Katha Upanisad,* IV, 6.

22 Cf. Heras, "The Devil in Indian Scriptures", *J.B.B.R.A.S.*, XXVII, p. 216.

23 *Mahābhārata,* Vana Pārva, 12602.

24 *Svetāsvatara Upanisad,* II, 16.

25 Origenis, *In Jeremiam,* Hom. IX, 4: Migne, *P.G.*, XIII, cols 356-357.

26 *Şvetāsvatara Upanisad,* IV, 12.

of golden colour, and nourishes him with wisdom".[27] The text signifies how the Son appears to the Father, as if He were golden, that is bedecked with the best possible material apparel ; and the Father, seeing Him so beautiful and rich, feeds Him with the best possible food. Kings choose the most precious and substantial food to be given to their sons. God selects for His Son the best food imaginable considering his spiritual nature. Such food is wisdom. This is to say that the Son is the repository of the Wisdom of the Father. Two marvellous words of the *Upanisad* summarise this tale of wondrous communication between the Father and the Son. The Father is named *bhoktā,* "the one who enjoys" ; and the Son is called *bhogyam,* "the enjoyed one".[28] As if it were saying : "This generation of the Golden Son is the cause of great enjoyment in the Father. He communicates all his wisdom to Him. For the Son being the joy of the Father, the Father does not know any other enjoyment than the Son." Of this divine *ānanda,* the Son also participates, for if He is the joy of the Father, the Father is also the joy of the Son. That is the reason why it is said that Brahma is *Vāc paramam vyoma,* "the highest heaven of Vāc",[29] that is to say the highest and purest enjoyment of the Word.

Vedic literature still gives us a few more details about this generation. When sons are born to the kings in this world, they are not born kings themselves, but they are babies like any other babies in the world. The kingly blood is their only difference, princely upbringing develops that royal element little by little and only when their fathers die, they may finally become kings. But it is totally different with our *Vāc.* "In the beginning rose *Hiranyagarbha,* born only Lord of all created things."[30] At the time of his generation He was already the only Lord of the whole creation ; that is the reason why, He is often called *Prajāpati.* Again the

---

[27] *Ibid.,* V, 2.
[28] *Ibid.,* I, 12.
[29] *Rgveda,* I, 164, 35.
[30] *Ibid.,* X, 121, I ; *Vajasaneyi Samhitā,* XIII, 4 ; XXXIII, 1.

Svetāsvatara gives the Father and the Son two names which are full of extraordinary meaning. The Father is called *Īsa,* "the Lord." The Son is styled *Anīsa,*[31] "one who has no Lord"[32]; now "one who has no Lord" is one who is the Lord himself. Hence the *Upanisad* by giving them two different names, openly declares that the Son is different from the Father; but while studying the meaning of the Son's name one easily realizes that even the Son is as good Lord as the Father is. Even in this is the Son a perfect *rūpam* of the Father; both are Lords of the whole creation..

But the relation of Vāc to the whole creation is still deeper. "Everything was made by Vāc."[33] He is "that one who as the unborn's image hath established and fixed firm these world's six regions".[34] For Vāc being the image of the Father is the prototype or model of the whole creation. So He, as "the unborn's (Father's) image, established and fixed firm these world's six regions." Hence it is said of Him that "the Babe unborn (*garbha*)[35] supported this world's burden."[36] Vāc himself is once introduced saying :—

"Through me alone all eat the food that feeds them
each man who sees, breathes, hears the word outspoken ;
They know it not, but yet they dwell beside me.
Hear, one and all, the truth as I declare it."[37]

On account of this intimate connection of the creation with Vāc, the latter is called the creation archetype, *visvacakṣāh,*[38], and more commonly *Hiranyagarbha,* "the golden seed"[39], for He is the seed out of which the whole universe

---

31 *Svetāsvatara Upanisad,* I, 8.
32 *Ibid.*
33 *Satapatha Brāhmana,* VIII, 1, 2, 9; IX, 1, 5, 18.
34 *Rgveda,* I, 164, 6.
35 Such is Griffith's translation, according to Sāyana's interpretation: "*garbha* does not mean "seed" here, but foetus."
36 *Rgveda,* I, 152, 3; *Atharvaveda,* IX, 10, 23.
37 *Ibid.,* X, 125, 4.
38 *Ibid.,* X, 81, I.
39 *Passim.* Dr. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, *op. cit.,* p. 82 calls the Son of God *Visvarūpa,* "the Form of the Universe."

has sprung, a denomination which may be equated with the *"lógos spermatikós"*, "the seminal word," of the Greek philosophers. The *Rgveda* treasures a hymn in honour of Hiranyagarba, as one of the most precious poetical specimens of the whole book.[40]

III

THE PHILOSOPHY OF GOD'S PATERNITY

A few philosophical notions concerning the life of God will be of some help to understand the fact of God's Paternity.

There is no doubt that the Paternity of God (not the paternity concerning all creatures by virtue of the creation, on account of which he is called Prajāpati ; but the Paternity concerning this Son whose filiation we are studying) is a Paternity totally different from the paternity in human generations. God is proclaimed *alinga,* sexless[41], and it should be so being a pure spirit.[42] From the moment myth introduces sex in the sphere of the godhead, truth is being besmeared by the darkness of ignorance.

Moreover there cannot be any doubt either about the intellectual nature of God. The Creator of the wonderful machinery of the whole world must be endowed not only with an omnipotent power by which every thing has been created, but also with an eminent intellectual vision by which every thing was planned with unparallel wisdom. "The supreme Brahman", says Sankara, "is eternal knowledge".[43] St. Thomas Aquinas avers that God is a pure intellectual act,[44] *i.e.* that He is eternally thinking without potentiality or power to think, but actually doing so, for otherwise there

---

40 *Rgveda,* X, 121.

41 *Katha Upanisad,* V, 8.

42 *Maitri Upanisad,* II, 5 ; VI, 15 ; *Svetāsvatara Upanisad,* VI, 16.

43 Sankara, *Brhadāranyaka Upanisad Bhāsya,* II, 9, 28, 7.

44 St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica,* I, q. 3, a. 2, in c.

would be a change in his mind, which cannot be conceived in the Immutable ; and, indeed, thinking not a succession of thoughts which cannot exist in eternity, but having always one and the same thought.

Ancient Indian philosophers substantially agreed to the views of St. Thomas when they crudely but truthfully stated that God is unable to think, for He has no potentiality. God is being introduced saying : "I am without all things headed by intellect (*i.e.* intellectual operations). I am the highest, the greatest of the great. I am always the form (*rūpa*) of thought ; I am without thoughts."[45] They admit moreover that he is in eternal meditation (*tapas*), that is to say eternally thinking without interruption, and consequently without succession of different thoughts, having always one and the same thought. For since Brahma is in reality *nirguna*, without qualities, this thought is not a quality attached to Him, but it is Himself, his own Being.

We are now in a position to understand what is the subject of this thought. God eternally knows Himself, neither is there anything worthy of his thought beyond Himself. "It knew only Itself as 'I am Brahman'".[46] And Sankara agrees : "The Supreme Brahman, being eternal knowledge, ever knows itself as Bliss Absolute."[47] It is essentially the knowledge of the Oneness. Otherwise there would be a succession of thoughts which cannot exist in the Eternal. This thought of Himself is the knowledge he has of Himself, known philosophically as the Word, the *lógos* in Greek, *Vāc* in Sanskrit. That is the reason why St. Paul calls the Word "the splendour of God's glory, and the figure of His substance"[48] ; and also "the image of the invisible God"[49] ; and the *Brāhmana* calls the *Vāc* of God, "a second Himself,"[50] for

[45] *Maitreya Upanisad,* III, 10.

[46] *Brhadāranyaka Upanisad,* I. 4, 10.

[47] Sankara, *Brhadāranyaka Upanisad Bhāsya,* III, 19, 28, 7.

[48] *Hebr.,* I, 3.

[49] *Coloss.,* I, 15.

[50] *Brhadāranyaka Upanisad,* I, 6, 3,

"Vāc, the World, does not say but what the intellect contemplates".[51] "It is essentially the knowledge of the oneness of Self".[52]

Now the knowledge that God has of Himself being most perfect, the Word must be a most perfect image of Himself, without any blemish or flaw, just as He is "a second Himself." In this world when a portrait of a person is taken, there is always room for improvement ; there may be another photographer who may take a better likeness than the preceding one. This is the reason why many portraits of the same person are taken. Moreover persons change, grow mature and old. That is another reason why many portraits of the same person are taken at different stages of one's own life.

But such reasons cannot be given in God. There cannot be any improvement over the reflexion and portrait of God, which is called the Word, *Vāc*. And since God never changes nor does He grow old, there is no room for a second portrait either. Consequently there is no need of a second *Vāc* ; one is enough.

Now this Word is produced in such a way as to receive the full substance of the Divine Intellect in himself, and thus this may be rightly called "generation", which is but the transference of a being's own life into that of another. Thus the Generated Word may fully be called the Son of the Generator, who is therefore his Father.

But this generation never ends, for it is eternal. "He is already generated, and He will be generated in future", says the *Svetāsvatara*. In this world once the generation of a son is finished, there may be room for the generation of another son. Not so in God, for the generation of His Son is never finished, it is eternal. There cannot be a new son generated while the generation of the first son is still going on. Hence God cannot have more than one Son.

---

51 *Satapatha Brāhmana*, V, 6, 7, 10.

52 *Mandukya Upanisad*, 7, Cf. Sircār, *Hindu Mysticism*, p. 64.

This is not to say that the paternity of God is limited. The Word, because it is infinite (the same as the Father), is complete, so to say ; we may even say in a human way of speaking that the infinite capacity of God, after the generation of his own knowledge, is fully exhausted. In the generation of His Son God has displayed His infinite fecundity, for the Son is as infinite as the Father.

IV.

THE BEGINNING OF THE INDIVIDUALIZATION OF THE SON OF GOD

Between the early age of theological conceptions and the much later period of mythological development of epic and puranic literature, there is a transitional period when myth is already introduced into philosophical speculations as an embroidery to enliven a dry subject. The abstract metaphysical ideas of the early philosophical period were not easily grasped and not remembered without difficulty by the common man in the street. The personal individualization of those ideas with proper nouns and characteristic actions was equivalent to communicating life to dry bones, making them live. In this period the Son of God is called *Sanatkumāra*, that is " the eternal Son ", or " the ever virgin ".

The earliest mention of Sanatkumāra is found in the very Upanisadic period. The Brāhman Nārada wants to know the doctrine of the Ātman, and, in order to obtain this knowledge, goes to Sanatkumāra, who enlightens him accordingly.[53] In this passage this Sanatkumāra is styled " the God of War. " But in another passage of the same Upanisad, he is identified with Skanda[54] which identification is confirmed by Sankara. "This same Sanatkumāra, people also call the deity Skanda—people who know his real character."[55] The

---

[53] *Chāndogya Upanisad,* VII, 1, 4.

[54] *Ibid.,* VII, 26, 2.

[55] *Ibid.,* Sankara, *Bhāsya,* p. 412.

same identification is found in the epic.[56] And a modern commentator Shri Hari Narayan Apte confirms this identification when affirming that Sanatkumāra is supposed to be the same as Kārttikeya.[57] Now Skanda and Kārttikeya, are two different names of the son of Siva, otherwise called Subrahmanya, Kumāra, Murugan, etc.

It is after all natural that the Son of God, so much spoken of in the Vedic period, should correspond to the son of Siva of the epic and Purānas. For the latter do not mention any son of Visnu. This would incline us to believe that the doctrine of *Vāc* and his generation from God is one of the dogmas that Vedic books derive from the old Dravidian religion. In point of fact, it is only mentioned in the last two *mandalas* of the *Rgveda* chronologically speaking, acknowledged now as influenced by Dravidian thought, and in later Vedic literature.

Why is Sanatkumāra given the little of "God of War" on this occasion? Sanatkumāra's identification with Skanda explains this title quite well. The Purānas and the epic introduce a lengthy account of the war waged by Tārakāsura and Grasana against Siva. In this war Skanda is finally deputed by his father to march on the enemies of God, and he succeeds in defeating and killing Tārakāsura.[58] In the *Rgveda* there seems to be an allusion to this event when *Vāc* says: "I bind the bow for Rudra, that his arrow may strike and slay the hater of devotion."[59] This heroic feat, which seems to take us to the first times after the creation,[60] surrounded Skanda with warlike reputation, which seems to be totally different from his original attributes.

---

[56] *Mahābhārata*, Salya Parva, 2716. Cf. Sörensen, *Mahābhārata Index*, p. 461.

[57] Apte, *Chāndogya Upanisad*, p. 180.

[58] *Mātsya Purāna*, CLIII-CXL; *Mahābhārata*, Anusasānika Parva, 4212.

[59] *Rgveda*, X, 125, 6. Cf. Heras, "The Devil in Indian Scriptures", *J. B. B. R. A. S.*, XXVII, p. 225-226.

[60] Cf. Heras, "The Devil in Indian Scriptures", J.B.B.R.A.S. XXVII, (1952), pp. 227-228.

Sanatkumāra is also often called in Sanskrit literature, "the son of Brahma."[61] In this transitional period God is still at times called Brahma, as in the *Upanisads*. In the *Tejobindu Upanisad* Siva says : "I am Brahma,"[62] or "I am Brahman", [63] or "I am the sole Brahman",[64] or "All this is Brahman alone. There is none other Brahman and that is 'I'".[65] The *Skanda Upanisad* referring to Achyuta (the Imperishable), says : "He is Mahādeva (Siva). He is Parabrahman".[66] At times He is also called Siva or Visnu, according to the sectarian influence of the writer. Hence Sanatkumāra, who is supposed to be the son of Siva, as he is identified with Skanda, may also be called son of Brahman. In fact, he is styled "the mind's son of Brahma," his *mānasa putra,*[67] which denomination establishes a perfect equation between Sanatkumāra and the son of the mind of God spoken of in Vedic literature.

Sanatkumāra is always associated with light, for being the son of God's mind, he is evidently the Wisdom of God ; and wisdom is always the source of enlightenment. In the epic he is said to be "bright".[68] In the *Dīgha Nikāya* "light and radiance" are described as appearing before Sanatkumāra, as if they were his heralds.[69] Similarly in the *Samjyutta Nikāya,* when once Sanatkumāra appears to the Buddha on the banks of the Snake River at Rājagrha, he is described as "shedding radiance by his effulgent beauty."[70] Mārkandeya relates the epiphany of Sanatkumāra to him, thus : "I saw....the divine Āditya (the sun) and an effulgent being, bright as fire itself, and small as a finger. The sun and

61 Cf. Keny, "The Nagas in Magadha", *J.B.B.R.A.S.* XXVIII, pp. 163, 168, 168.

62 *Tejobindu Upanisad,* II, p. 85. (Aiyar's ed. Madras, 1914)

63 *Ibid.*

64 *Ibid.,* III, p. 85.

65 *Ibid.,* p. 86.

66 *Skanda Upanisad,* p. 41.

67 *Visnu Purāna,* II, 7.

68 *Mahābhārata,* Sauptika Parva, 636.

69 Rhys Davids, *Dialogues of the Buddha,* II, pp. 243, 264.

70 *Samjyutta Nikāya,* I, 62. (*Kindred Sayings,* I, p. 191.)

this being together looked like twin fires, one joined to the other."[71] This second being manifests himself to the sage as Sanatkumāra, "shedding almost incomprehensible lustre, like a second fire-god".[72] Quite reasonably therefore did Nārada go to Sanatkumāra to receive from him enlightenment concerning the doctrine of the Ātman.

In fact among all the qualities of Sanatkumāra, his wisdom is especially emphasized. He is openly called "the preceptor".[73] Consequently even the ancient sages are said to go the Sanatkumāra to consult him about their doubts.[74] And Sanatkumāra himself is often introduced giving instructions to different persons. Now it is Purūravas who is taught by him on different occasions;[75] then Visvāvasu is also instructed by him;[76] here Mārkandeya gets the solutions of several problems from Sanatkumāra;[77] there Govinda, the steward of the kingdom of Kosala, is enlightened by Sanatkumāra about the advantages of world renunciation for reaching the heaven of Brahma.[78] Vrtrāsura,[79] Sankhyāyana,[80] Vyāsa[81] and the *rsis*[82] also received lessons from this foremost among *gurus*. Even Prajāpati[83] and Rudra[84] learn the essence of religion and philosophy from Sanatkumāra. The *Chāndoya Upanisad* relates that after Nārada had been cleansed of all impurities "the holy Sanatkumāra shows to him the opposite side (bank) of darkness",[85] *i.e.* the bank

---

71 *Harivamsa*, Harivamsa Parva, XVII. (Bose's, p. 51).
72 *Ibid.*, XVIII (Bose's p. 58.)
73 *Mahābhārata*, Sabha Parva, 441.
74 *Ibid.*, Aranyaka Parva, 12700.
75 *Ibid.*, Ādi Parva. 3145-3147; *Visnu Purāna*, III, 14.
76 *Mahābhārata*, Sānti Parva, 11784.
77 *Harivamsa, loc. cit.*, and XIX.
78 Rhys Davids, *Dialogues of the Buddha*, II, pp. 272-274.
79 *Mahābhārata*, Sānti Parva, 286.
80 *Bhāgavata Purāna*, XIII, 8, 7.
81 Wilson, *op. cit.*, p. LXXXVIII.
82 *Mahābhārata*, Sānti Parva, 227.
83 *Ibid.*, 13587;
84 *Ibid.*, Anusasānika Parva, 165-169.
85 *Chāndogya Upanisad*, VII, 26. 2.

beyond darkness. This darkness, is, according to Apte, the darkness of ignorance.[86] From which it is clear that Sanatkumāra has the power to dissipate the darkness of ignorance with the light of his wisdom; for God's "self effulgence always dispels the darkness of ignorance".[87] On another occasion the same Nārada learns the science of the Ātman (God) from Sanatkumāra, as commemorated above.

One of the most favourite subjects taught by Sanatkumāra is the subject of world renunciation in order to reach God. With Vrtra he discusses the subject of emancipation.[88] On a certain occasion he tells Nārada : "Do not be so taciturn ; be joyful in your mind. There is means to acquire happiness here." And then he teaches him the secret of bhakti-jnāna, accompanied with disgust for all material pleasures.[89] To Mārkandeya Sanatkumāra conferred "spiritual vision", "that knowledge which was difficult of attainment even by the *devas*".[90] In the Sekha-Sutta of the *Majjhima Nikāya* the Buddha quotes, explains and praises a sloka of ascetical meaning said to have been composed by Sanatkumāra.[91]

The epic has happily kept a lengthy discourse on emancipation and asceticism, which according to tradition had been given in ancient times by Sanatkumāra himself.[92] Our limited space does not allow us to quote this passage. We shall only transcribe the summary of Sanatkumāra's doctrines as given by Prof. R. D Ranade. "In the first place", says he, "Sanatkumāra seems to teach a spiritual hedonism. Happiness — and in Sanatkumāra's hands, happiness becomes the equivalent of spiritual happiness — is the spring of all action ;

---

[86] Apte, *Chāndogya Upanisad*, pp. 179-180 (1915).
[87] *Bhāgavata Purāna*, I, 1, 1.
[88] *Mahābhārata*, Sānti Parva, 10030-10086.
[89] *Padma Purāna*, Uttara Knanda, CXC, 54-64.
[90] *Harivamsa*, Harivamsa Parva, XVIII.
[91] Chalmers, *Further Dialogues of the Buddha*, 1, p. 258. The following works go on as written by Sanatkumāra: *Vāstruśāstra*, *Sanatkumāra Samhitā*, *Sanatkumāra-tāntra* and *Sanatkumāra-kalpa*. Cf. Sastri, *Prācina-Caritrakosa*, (In Marathi), p. 603.
[92] *Mahābhārata*, Sānti Parva, 9990-10097.

action is the cause of faith; faith, of belief; when a man believes, he thinks; when he thinks, he knows; and when he knows, he reaches the truth. In this way, happiness, action, faith, belief, thought, knowledge and truth constitute, in Sanatkumāra's hands, a moral ladder to realisation. Secondly, it is Sanatkumāra who teaches the doctrine of Bhūman. "*Bhūman*" is that infinite happiness which arises by the vision of the divinity all around. When anything else is seen, that is "*alpa*". Thus all possessions in the shape of cows and horses, elephants and gold, servants and wives, lands and palaces, are of little consequence as contrasted with Bhūman. Thirdly, the realization of Bhūman occurs when an experience such as is implied in the expression "*Sohamātma*" is attained. Lastly, Sanatkumāra teaches that *Ātman* is the source of all things whatsoever. From Ātman spring hope and memory; from Ātman spring space, light and waters; from Ātman everything unfolds, in Ātman everything hides itself. Ātman is the source of all power, all knowledge, all ecstasy".[93]

Sanatkumāra, being the *rūpam* of God, is accordingly held as Brahma himself. Govinda, the steward of the kingdom of Kosala, enters into a retreat to finally receive a revelation from Brahma. Yet Brahma does not appear to him. Sanatkumāra appears in his stead, and yet Govinda is as satisfied as it the revelation had been of Brahma himself.[94] To see Sanatkumāra was the same as to see Brahma. In point of fact the Buddha calls Sanatkumāra Brahma.[95] Again the *Mahābhārata* states that Siva himself among the *yogins* is Sanatkumāra,[96] thus showing in a practical way that Sanatkumāra is a perfect image of his father Siva.

There are some texts which speak of other sons of the mind of Brahma, mentioning them, besides Sanatkumāra. They are five in all and are mentioned by their respective

---

93 Ranade, *A constructive Survey of Upanisadic Philosophy*, pp. 52-53.

94 "Maha-Govinda Suttanta": Rhys Davids, *Dialogues of the Buddha*, II, p. 273.

95 *Ibid.*, p. 264. Cf. *J.R.A.S.*, 1894, p. 344.

96 *Mahābhārata*, Anusāsana Parva, 916.

names. They are Sananda, Sanaka, Sanandana or Sanatana and Ribhu.[97] Rather than four different brothers of Sanatkumāra, they seem to be four different names of the same Sanatkumāra himself. As regards the fifth Ribhu, this word happens to mean "clever," "skilful," "inventive" and "prudent", which are all qualities that befit SanatKumāra in his special attribute of wisdom. Moreover these additional four sons of Brahman are always spoken of as great ascetics,[98] in the same way as Sanatkumāra. Besides Sanandana is said to be a great sage,[99], and is described as being in profound meditation,[100] and always living in *Janaloka*[101]; which details fully agree with the characteristics of Sanatkumāra. Also Sanaka is said to be living in *Janaloka.*[102] It is also of interest to know that the *Harivamsa* limits the primogeniture among these five sons to Sanatkumāra : "I am the first born of Brahma," he himself says to Mārkandeya.[103] Sanatkumāra is, in fact, the most spoken among the five sons of Brahma. This seems to suggest that he was supposed to be the only son of Brahma in ancient times, and that at a later period, four other sons, doubles or replicas of the first were added.[104]

Besides the suspicion that these four names might have originally been four different names of Sanatkumāra or Skanda, which finally became four different personages (a not

---

97 Wilson, *Vishnu Purāna,* I, p. 77. note 1.

98 *J.R.A.S.,* 1895, p. 344; 1897. pp. 385-388.

99 *Visnu Purāna* I, 4.

100 *Ibid.,* V.

101 *Ibid.,* I. 4; II. 7; *Skanda Purāna,* Kasu·Khanda, XXII, 8-9.

102 *Visnu Purāna,* I, 4, VI, 4.

103 *Harivamsa,* Harivamsa Parva, XVII.

104 The *Linga Purāna,* I, 170-171 makes Sanatkumāra and Ribhu the first born of all. Cf. Wilson, The *Visnu Purāna,* I, pp. 77 ff. Since Ribhu in Sanskrit means clever, skilful, inventive, and prudent this perhaps may suggest that Ribhu was originally an epithet of Sanatkumāra, which was fiinally taken as the name of another son of Brahman when the other three replicas were added. Thus the five mind-born sons of Brahma may finally be the personification of the five characteristics of Sanatkumāra: 1. He as a man; 2. He as a sage: 3. He as an ascetic; 4. He as a prophet; 5. He as having divine nature,

uncommon phenomenon in ancient mythology); there may be, if we understand properly ancient Indian customs and ideals, a very high reason for the introduction of these other four sons. Number five in ancient India means 'plenitude' and 'fulness'.[105] The existence of five mind-born sons of Brahma seems to suggest that it is the fulness of Brahma's sonship, and since all five seem to be equal, that is to say, four being equal to the first, who is Sanatkumāra, one may easily understand that Sanatkumāra is the plenitude and fulness of Brahma's sonship; in other words, that he is the only son of Brahma and that there cannot be any other one. This seems to be the august mystery hidden behind the symbolical number of five mind sons of Brahma.[106]

The epic informs us that all creatures will merge in Sanatkumāra at the time of the dissolution of the world.[107] This privilege of being the end of all creatures is based on the fact that he is the individualisation of Vāc Hiranyagarbha. Himself being the Golden Seed, the Archetype, after which all the creatures were made, all will return to him. He is the beginning and He will be the end.

V

MURUGAN = SKANDA IS THE SON OF SIVA

The identification of the only son of the mind of God spoken of in *sruti* with Sanatkumāra of the transitional period,

---

105 Cf. Heras, "India, the Empire of the Svastika," *Coronation Souvenir, Bombay*, p. 40.

106 At a later period the number of sons of Brahma increased. Since they were five great *rsis*, and the seven great *rsis* were already traditional in India, the mind-sons of Brahma became seven. They are also mentioned in the *Padma Purāna*. Cf. Wilson, *op. cit.* II, p. 200, n. They are also spoken of in the *Mahābhārata*, Santi Parva, 13077-13080. Later one more is added. Sanatkumāra himself says: "I have seven brothers all younger to me" (*Harivamsa*, Harivamsa Parva, XVII). These seven brothers united with Sanatkumāra himself, make eight, which is a consecrated number in the history of Saivism. Siva is *astha mūrti*. An, his protohistoric counterpart, had eight forms. Cf. Heras, "The Religion of the Mohenjo-Daro People", *Journal of the University of Bombay*, V, pp. 7-9.

107 *Mahābhārata*, Sānti Parva, 12907 (Calcutta ed.).

leads us to identify the former once more with Skanda or Subrahmanya, son of Siva, in the purānic and epic period, Sanatkumāra beeing already acknowledged as Skanda. The Indus Valley inscriptions also speak of one son of Ān (the prototype of Siva), who receives the names of *Ānil,* "the son of Ān"[108], *Murugan,* "the boy"[109] and *Vēlan,* "one who holds the trident."[110] The equation therefore is perfect throughout the religious history of the country:

Sruti period	*Indus Valley period*	*Transitional period*	*Purānic and epic period*
Isvara	Ān	Brahma	Siva
Mind-born son Vāc	Anil Murugan Vēlan	Sanatkumāra	Skanda Subrahmanya Kumāra Kārttikeya

Of all these names of the Indus Valley period the most typical and characteristic seems to be Murugan. Ānil is only a record of his divine filiation; and Vēlan a description of his likeness. Murugan has remained unchanged in South India. The Tamilians call Subrahmanya *Muruga,* which, according to them, means 'the tender child', and is represented as a beautiful child or at most a youth, thus emphasizing the idea that he is "the son" of Siva. (Figure 1)

Dr Karmarkar is of opinion that Murugan is spoken of in the *Rgveda* under the name *Muradevah.*[111] This view seems very probable, for he is called a "foolish god"[112] one of "fools' gods" about whom the Āryas pray to Indra: "Let the fools' gods with bent neck fall and perish and see no more the sun when it arises".[113] Sāyana calls him a Raksasa. Karmarkar's

108 Heras, *op. cit.,* p. 29.

109 Heras, "The Vēlālas in Mohenjo-Daro", *I. H. Q.* (Calcutta), XIV, p. 53.

110 *Ibid.,* pp. 52-53.

111 Karmarkar, "The Vrātyas in Ancient India", *Journal of the University of Bombay,* XI (N.S.) (1942), p. 83; "Muruga or Karthikeya", *Journal of the Rama Varma Research Institute",* XII, pp. 12-13.

112 *Rgveda,* X, 87, 2.

113 *Ibid.,* VII, 104, 24.

views are not improbable for, as seen above, the Rgvedic *rsis* of a latter period knew of the spiritual generation of God's son,[114] recorded his name *Vāc,*[115] and even commemorated his participation in the victory over "the hater of Brahma,"[116] who is referred to as Tārakāsura in the epic and purānic period. The *Aitareya Brāhmana* unhesitatingly affirms that "Subrahmanya is Vāc".[117]

Three definite characteristics are mentioned in relation to Murugan :—

1. *His association with Wisdom* : Mythology states that he issued from the frontal eye of Siva as six sparks of fire,[118] *i.e.* born of Siva's head, having an extraordinary radiance from the very beginning. Accordingly he always holds the Trident, which typifies his energy of wisdom (*Jnāna-sakti*).[119] That is the reason why he is called Velan, from the Proto-Indian times, and also *Vēlayudha,* "He who carries a vel" (Fig. 2). Subrahmanya therefore represents God as a guru, the teacher of the universe.[120] He is the embodiment of *Jnāna-sakti,* and is as such called *Kumāra-Guru-Para,* 'the Supreme Son Teacher'. He is said to have taught the sage Agastya and other *rsis.* In order to show the excellence of his wisdom they affirm that he even declared truth to his own father Siva. Some of his images, as he is being worshipped in Palni, depict him in *kataka-hasta,* the gesture of communication, by which he is imparting the fruits of his wisdom to others.

2. *His unilateral birth* : Vedic works clearly declared his generation from the mind of God, without the intervention

---

114 Cf. above, p. 70.

115 *Rgveda,* X, 125.

116 *Ibid.,* X, 125, 6. Cf. *Aitareya Brāhmana,* III, 4, 39 ; *Jaiminīya Upanisad Brāhmana,* I, 18, 5 ; *Jaiminīya Brāhmana,* I, 60, 1-7 ; Heras "The Devil in Indian Scriptures", *J.B.B.R.A.S.,* XXVII, pp. 225-226.

117 *Aitareya Brāhmana,* VI, 1, 3.

118 Somasundaram Pillai, *Palni : The Sacred Hill of Muruga,* p. 12, n. I.

119 *Ibid.,* p. 10 n.

120 Shivapadasundaram, *The Saiva School of Hinduism,* p. 184.



Fig 1
Muruga, as worshipped in Palni
Indian Historical Research Institute, Bombay.



Fig. 2
Velan
Indian Historical Research Institute, Bombay.



Fig. 3
Shanmukha (Marble)
Indian Historical Research Institute, Bombay.



Fig. 4
Shanmukha on the Peacock
Indian Historical Research Institute, Bombay.

of any goddess. This great dogma of God's life is reflected in the mythological mirror in different ways. According to one story, which we referred to above, Subrahmanya was born from the eye on Siva's forehead. Another legend says that the seed discharged (*skanna*) by Siva, produced a *sveta* (white) mountain where Skanda was born. In this case Pārvatī is reported as bitterly complaining that she was denied the pleasure of becoming a mother.[121] Another account avers that Siva's seed was transferred to the six Krttikas (the Pleiades) ; when the latter went to bathe, each of them conceived and begot a son ; all these children were combined in one, when Pārvatī embraced them all together.[122] That is the reason why he is called *Kārtikeya* and *Shanmukha* or *Arumugan* (in Tamil). (Fig. 3.) The idea of these six heads may also have sprang, from the tradition of Subrahmanya's embodiment of wisdom. Great sages are often endowed with big heads. Six heads must therefore be the seat of divine wisdom. (Fig. 4)

3. *His perpetual sonship* : He is ever called *Kumāra* and *Murugan.* He is shown as a very little boy between Siva and Pārvatī in the beautiful group of the Dravidian Triad known as Sōmāskanda (*i.e.* Sōma = Siva + Umā + Skanda). (Fig. 5.) In the stone carvings the little boy is shown seated on one of the knees' of Pārvatī.[122] Three of these remarkable sculptures may be seen at Mahābalipuram. (7th and 8th cent) (Fig. 6 and 7) In the metal images, Skanda is shown standing still as a little boy. The Madras Museum has a most beautiful specimen of this group. Another one may be seen in the Museum of the Indian Historical Research Institute. (Fig. 8) Accordingly Subrahmanya is supposed to be a Brahmachāri (celibate), and he is as such shown as a young boy, his head being shaved, a tuft of hair only being left, wearing only a *kaupīna,* (small cloth), a *yajnōpavita* (sacred thread) and a *maunji* (grass girdle). This statues, which are very rare, depict his left hand in *Katyava-*

121 *Rāmāyana,* Balakanda.

122 This association with Pārvatī is purely accidental. In another article we may develop "The case of the Mother Goddess".

lambita-hasta. We possess one in the Indian Historical Research Institute.[123] (See Fig. 1) Mythology shows him living a life of celibacy in Mount Krauncha, adding the dramatic trait that this was as an effect of disappointment after the marriage of his brother Ganapati.[124] Perhaps on account of this association with Mount Krauncha, he in the Tamil country, receives the titles of *Kurinji Āndavar,* " the Lord of hilltops ", *Kurinji Vendan,* " the King of hilltops ", *Kurinji Iraivan,* " the god of hilltops " and *Kurinji-man,* " the one of the mountains. " Many of his temples in South India are on the tops of hills, Palni, Tiruparankunram (Madurai), Tiruverangam (Malabar), Swāmimalai (Kumbakonam), Tiruttani, etc. The last but one canto of the Tamil poem *Tirumurugārruppadai* is entitled *Kunruthoradal* and describes Subrahmanya " sporting on all hills ".[125]

At a later period the purity of this tradition concerning the celibacy of Kumāra was darkened with the faked account of his marriage first to Devasena ; and then in South India to the Kurava girl Valli-amman. Accordingly when he is depicted as *Senāpati* he is often shown with one wife Devesena. The Madras Museum has a beautiful stone specimen in which Senāpati is riding the peacock, his usual *vāhana.* In South India he is at times shown with his two consorts Valli-amman and Devayanai, of whom the former rides a lion and the latter an elephant. Specimens of Subrahmanya with these two spurious wives may be seen at the Nagesvarasvāmin temple of Kumbakonam or at the Siva temple of Tiruvorriyur (Fig. 12).

4. *His Leadership of the army of the Devas* : Vrtra, the opponent of Indra in the *Rgveda,* becomes Tārakāsura in the epic and purānic period. When he, helped by Grasana, arises against Siva, Indra was feard not to be a match for them. Siva was in need of a son to oppose the evil one. It was then that Kārttikeya was born. In the Mahīsamardhinī

---

123 Cf. reproduction of a popular picture in Jouveau-Dubreuil, *Iconography of Southern India,* pl. XXXII.

124 *Siva-Mahāpurāna,* Rudra Samhitā, Kumāra Khanda, ch. 20.

125 Somasundaram Pillai, *Palni,* pp. 44-45.



FIG. 5
Somaskanda, from the Mahisasura Mandapa, Mahabalipuram
Copyright, Archaeological Survey of Indi



FIG. 6
Somaskanda, from Sea Shore Temple, Mahabalipuram
Copyright, Archaeological Survey of India.

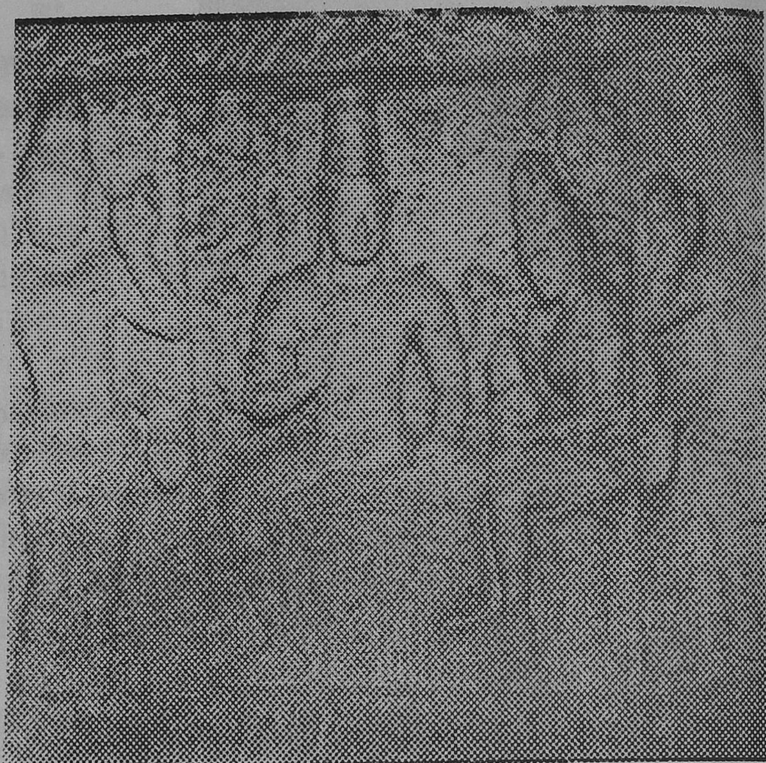


FIG. 7
Somaskanda, from
Dharmaraja's Ratha,
Mahabalipuram
opyright, Archaeological
Survey of India.

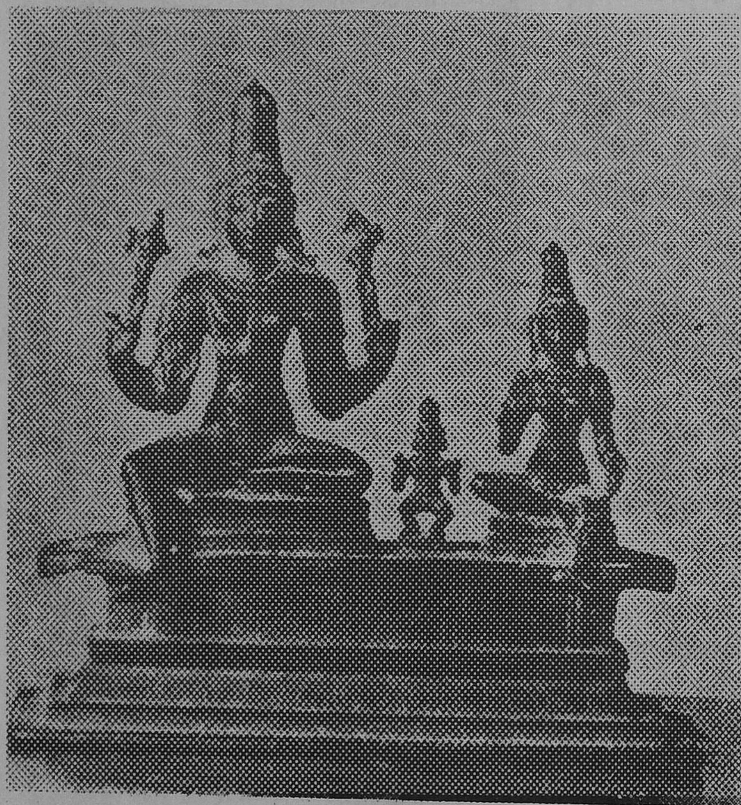


FIG. 8
Somaskanda (Bronze)
Indian Historical Research
Institute, Bombay.

cave of Mahābalipuram there is a large panel representing this scene. It has generally been wrongly described as Nārayana or Sesabhāgvan.[126] (Fig. 9.) Tārakāsura and Granana are shown as two colossal giants plotting to destroy Siva while the latter is peacefully sleeping on Ananta (eternity). On this occasion Skanda is born. He is seen in front rising from the earth ; his thighs are still half hidden in the ground. He wears the *yajnōpavita,* the *maunji* and the *kaupīna.* He holds the *sakti,* a weapon he is going to use against the *asuras,* in his right hand. He is talking to one who is half kneeling to his left, probably Indra or Agni, while a *devi,* probably Pārvatī, is behind him in a worshipping position. The epic narrates that when Indra heard of the birth of Siva's son to defeat Tārakāsura "he was troubled thinking that his kingdom was taken away from him" ; but he recovered his peace of mind when he heard Siva saying to his son Skanda : "Thou wast born in order that thou mightest slay Tāraka and protect the realm of Indra. Therefore do your duty." Then Skanda received from Agni a weapon of extraordinary efficiency, the *sakti,* for his combat with the *asuras.* It possessed great lustre and seemed to blaze with light ; when during the conflict Skanda repeatedly hurled this blazing missile, meteors and thunderbolts dropped upon the earth and millions of darts came out of it. Thus Skanda reduced millions of *asuras* to ashes and finally killed Tārakāsura, their leader.[127] That is the reason why he "was particularly hated by all the daityas".[128] When Skanda is depicted

---

126 The cave is a purely Saiva cave nor would a Vaisnava argument have been depicted in such a prominent place when Visnu himself is shown as a small *deva,* in the same way as Brahma, in the background of the Sōmāskanda shrine. Cf. Keny, "The Image of Nārayana," *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute,* XXIX (1948), pp. 215-226. In the so-called Ananta-Sayana group of the Undavalli cave, near Vijayavada, the two giants Tārakāsura and Grasana are also seen at the feet of the supine god. They are in the same inimical attitude. In fact the Mahābalipuram asuras seem to have been copied from these.

127 *Mahābhārata,* Āranyaka Parva, 14311-15, 14402, 14368-86 ; 14423-38 ; 14520- 14627 ; Salya Parva 2455-61, 2498, 2523, 690-94 ; Sānti Parva CCLXXXI-CCLXXXII ; Anusāsana Parva, 4212-14 ; *Mātsya Purāna* CLIII-CLX ; *Skanda Purāna,* XX-XXIX ; *Katha Sarit Sāgara,* (Tawney's ed.), I, p. 5 ; II, p. 102.

128 Venkatakrishna Rao, "The Ganapati Cult", *Q.J.M.S.,* XLI, p. 99.

as *Tārakari-Subrahmanya* he is shown riding on a peacock holding the *vajra* and the *sakti*. There is a remarkable specimen of this image at Aihole, Bijapur District. In connection with these military activities he receives the names of *Mahāsena*, 'great Captain' and *Tārakajit*, 'the slayer of Tāraka.'

It is undoubtedly on account of this leadership of the hosts of heaven that Kumāra is also called the leader or the lord of the *ganas*, the attendants to his father Siva. Hence the title of *Ganapati* was also born by Kumāra. When the *ganas* were defeated by Arjuna, Skanda is depicted addressing them as his subjects, enthusing them to fight courageously and not fleeing away from his enemy like cowards.[129] As leader and protector of this army of celestials, whom he hides and shields against the *asuras*, Skanda is also called *Guha*.[130]

The cult of Subrahmanya seems to have been very old in South India, specially in the Tamil-nādu. He is very often mentioned in Sangam literature, being called the "Red god."[131] He was especially worshipped in the mountainous region of the Kuravas, whose orgies in his honour are described in the *Tirumurugārruppadai*[132] and in the *Pattupāttu*.[133] His main shrine in Palni dates from a very early period. He was not only worshipped by jungle people but also by high class people, as the name of Vijaya Skandavarman, one of the Pallava Kings, clearly shows. These kings carved his image in the shrines of Mahābalipuram. In an old Pallava relief embedded in the Rājarājesvara Temple of Tanjore there is a unique representation of Kumāra.[134] The relief reproduces Bhāravi's story of Arjuna's penance. Next to the images of Siva and Pārvatī on Mount Kailāsa one sees this couple going

129 Bhāravi, *Kiratārjunīya*, XV.

130 For instance in the *Kumāra Sambhava.*

131 *Tolkāppiyam*, por. 5.

132 Cf. Somasundaram Pillai, *Palni*, pp. 44-47.

133 *Pattupāttu*, I, 220-249.

134 I owe this information to my intimate friend Shri T. N. Ramachandran, Joint Director General of Archaeology, whose knowledge of South Indian temples and iconography is unparallelled. I understand that a book on Arjuna's Penance in Indian Art by Mr. Ramachandran will soon be published.

FIG. 9
Birth of Skanda, from the Mahisasura Mandapa, Mahabalipuram
Copyright, Archaeological Survey of India.

174
A

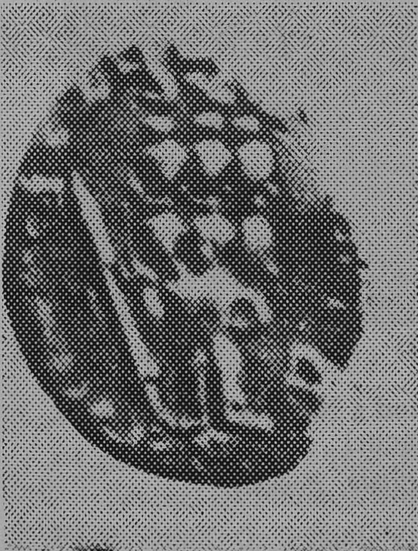


Fig. 10
Shanmukha on a coin
of the Yaudheyas



Fig. 11
Kumara seated on the
Peacock on a coin of
Kumara Gupta I

Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum, London.



174B.

FIG. 12
Karttikeya seated on the Peacock and a Naga, with his two wives (Copper Plaque)

Indian Historical Research Institute, Bombay.

to the forest where Arjuna is performing his *tapas*. Pārvatī is, on this occasion, shown holding little Kumāra on her right arm. The same composition is repeated next to the field where the fight between Siva and Arjuna takes place. Pārvatī continues holding Kumāra, when witnessing the fight. This attachment between Kumāra and Pārvatī is all the more significant in the growth of Kumāra's myth, if one considers the unilateral birth of Siva's son. But his earliest representation and the earliest dedication of a separate temple to Siva's son was at Kannanur (old Pudukkottai State), which belongs to the early Cōla period.[135]

Not less known was Skanda in northern India in ancient times. Patānjali mentins Siva and Skanda.[136] Numismatic evidence declares him as a popular deity in the beginning of the Christian era.[137] One silver coin of the Yaudheyas, of the 2nd century A. D., (Fig. 10) bears his six-headed image, holding a long spear in his right hand, the left resting on the hip. The inscription says : "Of Brahmanya (a name of Kārttikeya) the divine lord of the Yaudheyas". Another inscription says : "Of Kumāra, the divine Lord Brahmanya-deva".[138] The country of the Yaudheyas was called Rohitoka. This country of Rohitoka was said to be especially favoured by Kārttikeya.[139] A seal of Mahārāja Gautamīputra who had conquered the Vindhyas, avers that he "had made over his kingdom to the great lord Kārttikeya".[140] The Gupta family was apparently much devoted to this son of Siva, as among the six great imperial Guptas, three bear names of this God, two Kumāra Guptas and one Skanda Gupta. One of the former in one of his inscriptions mentions a temple of *Swāmi Mahāsena* (another denomination of Skanda) to which a grant had been made.[141] Even a thief is spoken of by the

---

135 Soundrarajan, "The Joint Development of the Early Tamils", *Journal of Indian History*, XXXI (1953), p. 255.

136 Patānjali, *On Pānini*, V. 3, 99.

137 Banerjea, *The Development of Hindu Iconography*, pp. 154-160.

138 Allan, *Catalogue of Coins of Ancient India*, pls. CXLIX, CL.

139 *Mahābhārata*, Aranyaka Parva, 1442.

140 Banerjea, op. cit., p. 156.

141 Fleet, *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, III, pp. 44-45.

name of Sarvilaka who used to invoke the blessings of Skanda before beginning the work of his profession.[142] Kumāra Gupta I's coins bear the image of Kumāra seated on the peacock on the reverse. (Fig. 11) Finally the famous *Mahākavya* of Kālidāsa, the *Kumāra Sambhava,* which poetically narrates the birth of Skanda, and the *Skanda Purāna* highly testify to the veneration of this son of Siva in northern India.[143] In particular, according to Kālidāsa, Guha seems to have been the only son of Pārvatī (*sic*), certainly the first.[144] A very famous stele, owned by the Bharata Kala Bhavan of Banaras, is a further iconographical evidence of this veneration. (Fig. 12) Skanda is shown in the *mahārājalīla* pose, seated upon his vāhana, the peacock, whose tail, spread behind the god, forms a sort of *prabhāvali* for the figure. Skanda has the *sula* or javelin in his left hand, while the right one holds a fruit, which looks like a pomegranate. The peacock, resting on the ground, wants to eat the sweet grains of the fruit. Skanda is shown wearing a low but ornate headgear, large circular earings that come down upon his shoulders, and a rich necklace out of which two decorative tusks and a *cakra* are pending. The face of the god is youthful, peaceful and very pleasing.

And yet at a later period all devotion of northern India to Skanda or Kārttikeya died out. In some places it is surrounded with a certain superstitious fear. In the Bombay State no woman whose husband is alive would ever visit a temple of *Kārttikeya Swāmi.*[145] "In Bengal it is stated that the temple of Subrahmanya is favoured by disreputable women on certain occasions for favour peculiar to their interest".[146] Thus Skanda is now almost exclusively a South

---

142 Sudraka, *Mrccha Katika* III, 14, 1. This very thief calls all thieves "*Skanda putras,*" "the children of Skanda." (III, 12, 2). One wonders why Skanda is made the patron of thieves.

143 The oldest ms. of the *Skanda Purāna* has been found in Nepal. It is in Gupta script of the 7th cent. Cf. Winternitz. *History of Sanskrit Literature,* I, p. 71, n. I.

144 Kālidāsa, *Kumāra Sambhava,* V,14.

145 Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography,* II, pt. 2, p. 415.

146 Mahadeva, "Lord Subrahmanya: His Many Names," *The Hindu Organ* (Jaffna, Ceylon), 1937, April 13, p. 1.

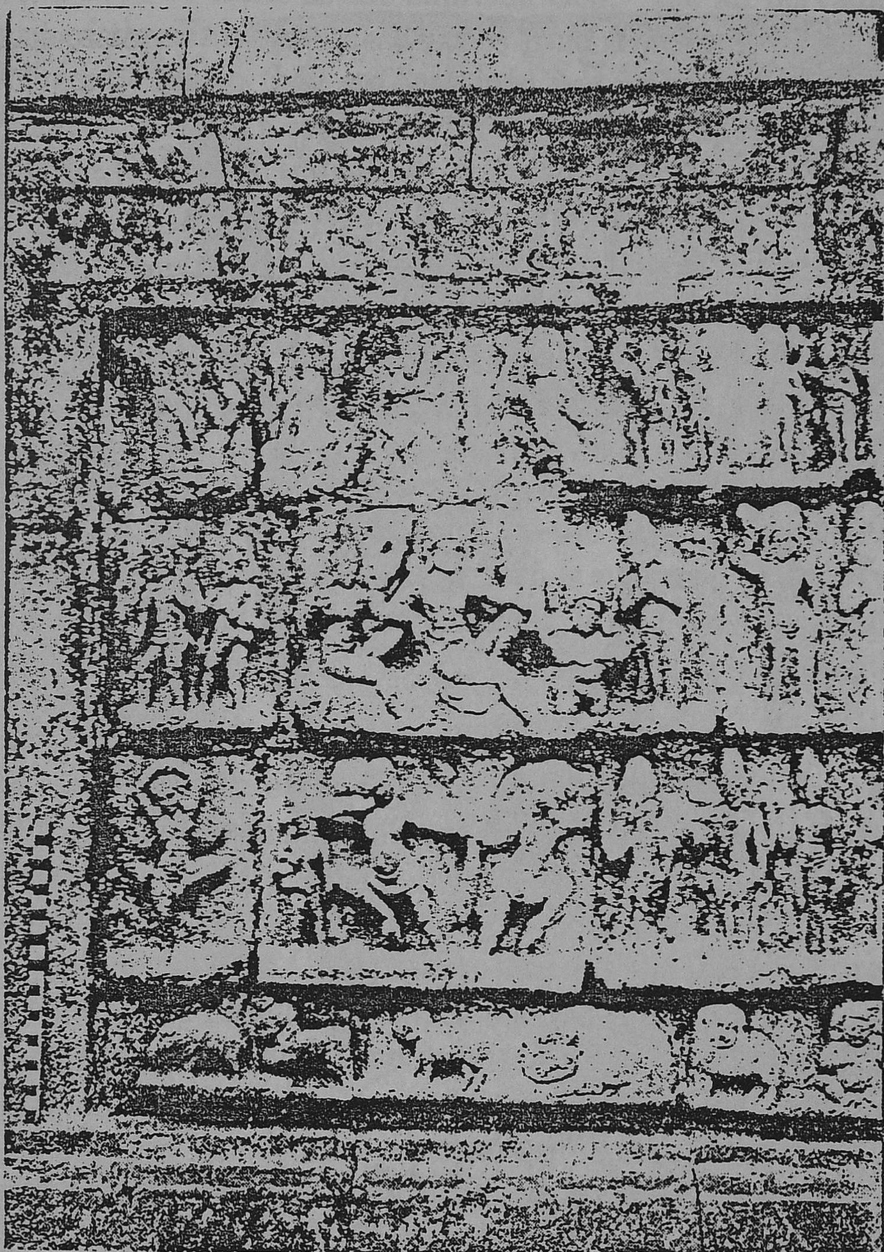


FIG. 13

Kiratarjuniya Panels in the Second Gopuram of the Brihadisvara Temple, Tanjore

(Parvati holding Skanda in her arms is seen in the middle and last row)

Copyright, Archaeological Survey of India.



Fig. 14
Skanda on his Peacock
Courtesy of the Bharata Kala Bhavan, Banaras.

Indian deity. "There is not a village, however small, which does not possess a shrine for Subrahmanya."[147] He is, in fact, adored at times as the supreme God, "the all pervading spirit of the Universe, the Essence from which all things are evolved, by which they are sustained and into which they are involved.[148] What a contrast with the indifference of northern India !

VI

THE APPEARANCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF GANAPATI

But we have now to account for another element in the worship of the Son of God ; for in the historical period of India, both in epics and Purānas, Siva is supposed to have two sons, Ganesa and Karttikeya. That is the great problem, which we have to solve. Who is Ganapati and where does he come from ?

A few very early facts of what we may call the pre-history of Ganesa may help us to find the final solution to this problem.

Some names of Ganapati are heard in the literary history of India before he actually appears in our great sub-continent. It appears for the first time in the *Rgveda*. Brahmanaspati is given the title of Ganapati, "the lord of the Ganas," *ganānām tvā ganapatim havāmahe,*[149] the latter forming the host of demigods, which were later on supposed to be the attendants of Siva. Brahma or Brahmanaspati is naturally proclaimed their lord and king from very early

147 *Ibid.*

148 Somasundaram Pillai, *Palni* p. 32, n. 1. Among the Grāma-Devatas or village deities of South India there is one called Ayanar, who also claims to be the son of Siva and of Visnu, under the form of Mōhinī. Accordingly he is called *Hariharaputra.* Though he seems to be an old indigenous deity, some characteristics are typical of Murugan. He has a trident upon his head always. He is supposed to be a soldier *Nallasevaga*, but he also uses a stick only used by ascetics.

149 *Rgveda,* II, 23, 1.

days. In the same way Indra is also called "Ganapati among the *ganas.*"[150] Yet the title migrates to indicate Siva at a later period, for in the epic Siva is styled Ganesa and Ganesvana, ("the lord of the Ganas.").

By an extraordinary antithesis the other name is attached to four demons by the name Vināyaka, malignant beings who created obstacles and difficulties,[151] but who were easily propitiated.[152] Purānic literature of a much later period explains that the group of four Vināyakas was merged into one definite god whom Rudra constituted the "Leader of the Ganas," *Ganapati.*[153] Was this Ganapati — Vināyaka already endowed with the elephantine face as in the later icons? It seems so, for in the *Taittirīya Āranyaka* there is a mystical prayer addressed to a god called *Dantin,* "the one of the tusk," who is said to possess a twisted trunk (*vakratunda*) and who holds a corn-sheaf, a sugar cane and a club.[154] The description is so characteristic of Ganapati, that we cannot resist to accept his full identification with this Vedic Dantin, a name which is also given to him in the historical period.

After this reference, a decorative frieze round the Kantaka Cetinga stūpa, near Mihintale, in Ceylon (a monument which is mentioned in inscriptions of the 1st and 2nd centuries) depicts a double procession of dwarfish *ganas,* carrying gifts, converging to a central point, wherein there is another dwarfish figure with the face of an elephant, with his trunk turned to the left, as most of his images of a later period are.[155] This undoubtedly is the Ganapati — Vināyaka having a *vakratunda,* of the *Taittirīya Āranyaka.* In the *Smrti* of Yājnavalkya, written in the 6th century, he is definitely mentioned as a demon exalted to the rank of a *deva;*[156] but

---

150 *Ibid.,* X, 112, 9.

151 *Aitareya Brāhmana,* I, 21.

152 Bhandarkar, *Vaisnavism, Saivism and other Minor Sects,* pp. 147-8.

153 *Ibid.,* p. 148.

154 *Taittirīya Aranyaka,* X, 1, 5.

155 Getty, *Ganesa. A Monograph on the Elephant-faced God,* p. 25, pl. 22, c.

156 Bhandarkar, *op. cit.,* p. 148.

he is not described as elephant-headed till the eight century.[157]

This is a very humble origin of the great Ganapati. As leader of the *ganas*, he was supposed to be an aspect of Siva and he appears as distinct from Siva, endowed with divine qualities, in the introduction to the north India recension of the *Mahābhārata.* In this work Siva himself is named as *Ganesāna*, thus still showing his connections with our Ganesa.[158] Accordingly in the rock-cut temples of Aihole, which are supposed to be some of the oldest of India, he is shown as an attendant of Siva.[159] This lowly origin of Ganesa is corroborated by this statement attributed to Manu: "Sambhu (Siva) is the god of the Brahmans, while Ganesa is the god of the Sūdras."[160] Considering all these points Miss Getty is led to affirm that he "seems only to have been known to the uneducated classes up to the sixth century".[161]

But precisely in this century, during the Gupta period, the first image of Ganesa appears in India, and that with very remarkable features. The image was discovered at Bhumāra, a village in the old Nāgaudh State, in Madhya Pradesh, and is now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Three of his hands hold the axe, his broken tusk and a *modaka* (or cake), the fourth being round the *sakti* (his fingers appear touching her left breast). The most extraordinary feature is the *saktī* or *devi*, seated on the left thigh of Ganapati. She offers him a bowl of *ladhus* (sweets), which he takes with his trunk. The right upper corner of the stone behind the image is broken, but on the opposite side one sees a *gana*, which image makes one think that the sculptor still wanted to emphasize the fact that this god was the "Lord of *ganas*".[162]

---

[157] *Ibid.*, p. 179.

[158] Getty, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

[159] *Ibid.*, p. 28.

[160] Hopkins, *Religions of India*, p. 487.

[161] Getty, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

[162] Coomaraswamy, "The Origin and use of Images in India," *International Studio*, 1929 (May), 23.

This image discloses an extraordinary development round Ganapati not only in the sphere of art, but in the very world of religious speculations. The appearance of his *saktī* on this occasion clearly suggests the existence of other images and texts concerning Ganesa, which have not come down to us up to now.

It was precisely at about the same time or a little earlier than the sect of the Ganapatyas arose in Northern India, though they came into evidence only in the 10th century with the appearance of the book *Sankaradigvijaya,* written by one Ānandatīrtha, which discloses the history and tenets of the sect. It was undoubtedly this sect that gave an extraordinary impulse to the cult of Ganapati in Northern India. The Ganapatyas worshipped Ganesa, as the "Lord of the Universe" with the exclusion of all other gods, even Siva himself. Such was one of their prayers :

> "Praise be to thee, Ganapati.
>
> "Thou art the visible Reality. Thou art the Creator, the Preserver, the Destroyer, the Supreme Brahma, the spirit Manifest. The universe is born from thee. The Universe is manifest in thee : earth, water, fire, air and ether. Thou art Brahma, thou art Visnu, thou art Rudra. Thou art superior to the Trimūrti.
>
> "Om ! Praise be to thee, Ganapati ".[163]

The Ganapatyas worshipped the *saktī* of Ganapati as well as his *linga ;* some phalic images of this god connected with his *saktī,* which will be mentioned later, may be the product of this double additional cult. Even after the division of the sect into six sub-sects, all acknowledged *Ganapati* as the First Cause "through whose *māyā,* Siva and the other gods were created." Accordingly they worshipped him endowed with ten pairs of arms and holding his *saktī,* styling him *Paramatma* (Supreme Spirit) and *Mahāganapati.*[164] (Fig. 15.)

Ganesa, being thus the supreme in the Indian pantheon, could reduce all other gods to nothingness. The *Ganesa*

---

163 *Sankaradigvijaya,* pp. 106 ff. (Bibl. Ind., Calcutta, 1868).
164 Colebrooke, *Miscellaneous Essays,* I, 212 (London, 1837).

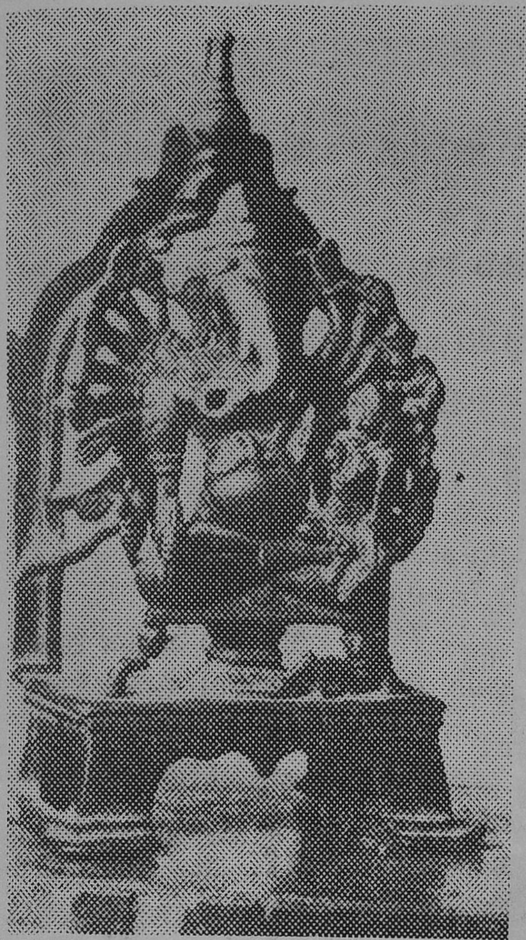


FIG. 15
Mahaganapati with his Sakti
Indian Historical Research Institute, Bomba



FIG. 16
Heramba Ganapati on the Lion
Indian Historical Research Institute, Bombay.



FIG. 17
Dancing Ganapati
Indian Historical Research Institute, Bombay.



FIG. 18
Nataraja with Ganapati learning
his Father's Dance
(Aihole, 6th cent.)
Copyright, Archaeological Survey of India.

Purāna relates that he once granted Tripurāsura to conquer the three worlds. Accordingly he conquered Brahma and Visnu ; when he requested Siva to descend from Mount Kailāsa, he was not obeyed immediately. Instead Siva, accompanied by Brahma and Visnu appeared to Ganesa to save them from utter distruction. They finally succeeded owing to Siva's faith in Ganesa's power.[165]

It was doubtlessly the influence of this sect that introduced Ganapati and his myths into the Purānas, which were finally redacted all along this period. The *Brahmavaivarta Purāna* contains many stories about him (*Ganesa Khanda*).[166] The *Agni Purāna* speaks of his cult (Ch. 71). The *Vamana Purāna* narrates the origin of the god. The *Varāha Purāna* refers likewise to his birth. In some recensions of the *Srsti Khanda* of the *Padma Purāna* there is also much about the cult of Ganesa. The *Garuda Purāna* includes him among the five gods whose rules of worship are declared, *viz.* Visnu, Siva, Durga, Sūrya and Ganesa. Needless to say that the *Ganesa Purāna* is fully a fruit of the spirit of the Ganapatyas. Siva is introduced in it as waiting on Ganesa with the most austere devotion for a stretch of ten years and thereby winning from him the boon of victory over the demon Tripurāsura.[167]

The influence of the ideas of the Ganapatyas was so great that they made him, as it were, at home in every other sect, combining him with almost all other gods, so that now "all sects unite in claiming him as their own".[168] Thus Saktism adopted Ganesa as their especial deity with the exclusion of all other gods even of Siva and Pārvati.[169] We have seen how Ganesa appears with his *saktī* even in the first image we have of this god. In Ellora there is a figure

---

165 Cf. *J.R.A.S.*, VIII, (1845), pp. 319-323.

166 Cf. Wilson, *Essays on Sanskrit Literature*, I, pp. 103-106.

167 A very good analysis of this *Upapurāna* may be seen in Stevenson, "Analysis of the Ganesa Purāna", *J.R.A.S.*, 1846, pp. 319-329.

168 Srikanta Iyer, "The Popular View of Ganesa in Madras," *Indian Antiquary*, XXX, p. 255.

169 Cf. Getty, *Ganesa*, p. 20.

of Umā (Pārvatī), having four hands, in the upper pair of which she balances a small statue of Ganesa in one and a *linga*, in the other, thus equating Siva and Ganapati.[170] At Bhera-ghat, near Jubbulpore, there is a temple where there is a female form of Ganesa, a Ganesānī, whose left bent leg is supported by a small Ganesa, half kneeling underneath.[171] This is the only image of a female counterpart of Ganesa in the whole of India ; but female forms of Ganesa are known in Tibet.[172]

The *saktī* accompanying some of the images of Ganesa is at times called Lakshmī, thus showing this god invading the boundaries of Vaisnavism. Such is the eight-handed Ganapati accompanied by Lakshmī, which is found in the Visvanātha-svāmin temple of Tenkasī in the Tirunelveli District. More clearly Vaisnava is still a pre-Angkorian figure of a standing Ganesa in Cambodia, whose two upper hands hold the *cakra* and the *sankha* of Visnu.[173]

Our little god is also much at home in Krsnaism. The *Brahmavaivarta Purāna* equates Ganesa with *Krsna* himself originally in the human form. Accordingly in the *Ganesa Khanda*, Radhā, Krsna's wife, is being depicted adoring Ganesa.[174] In the spirit of this identification a *Ganesa Gītā* was likewise produced, which is not different from the *Bhagvad Gītā*, the name of Ganesa being only substituted for that of Krsna.[175] Consequently it is not strange to find icons of *Bāla Ganesa* crawling in the same way as Bāla Krsna,[176] or denominations as *Navanīta Ganesa*, which has given foundation to one of the subsects of the Ganapatyas.

Ganapati is also being worshipped by some Jainas of Gujerat in some rock temples.[177] The Museum of our Indian

---

170 Burgess, *Report on the Elura Cave Temples*, pl. XXX. fig. 2.

171 Getty, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

172 *Ibid.*, p. 43.

173 *Ibid.*, p. 50. pl. 250.

174 Cfr. Wilson, *Essays on Sanskrit Literature*, I, p. 117.

175 Monier Williams, *Indian Wisdom*, p. 139 (London, 1875).

176 Getty, *op. cit.*, p. 8 and pl. 15 b.

Historical Research Institute possesses a few metal images of Ganesa which came from places of Jaina worship, among them one of Mahā-Ganapati with his *saktī*, of which the Museum is rightly proud. (See Fig. 15). These Jaina images have their *prabhāvalis* always crowned by a *kalasa*.

The cult of Ganesa has especially been spread by the Buddhists.[178] Their devotion is founded upon a mystic *mantra*, called the *Ganapatihrdaya*, (" the heart of Ganapati "), which was supposed to have been given to Ananda by the Buddha himself, but whose origin is evidently much later.[179] The *mantra* in question contains an invocation to be used at the time of the dedication of a status of a dancing Ganesa, endowed with three eyes. Ganesa being thus officially, though surreptitiously introduced into *Mahāyana* Buddhism, it is not strange to find his images ornate with Buddhist characteristics ; one of Champa has the *usnīsa* or skull protuberance (one of the *mahāpurusa-laksanas* adopted by the Buddhists)[180] ; in another Ganesa is seated in *padmāsana*, as seen in statues of Gautama ;[181] a third one depicts him in *bhūmisparsamudrā*, so often reproduced in the figures of the Buddha.[182]

The cult of Ganapati travelled on a *Mahāyana* Buddhist ticket to very far foreign lands. Burma, Siam, Champa. Cambodia, Nepal, Tibet, Chinese Turkestan, Khotan, China, Mongolia and Japan admitted Ganesa into their pantheon, spread his cult throughout and created new artistic manifestations of his in sculpture and painting.[183] How deeply did Ganapati go into the heart of the people the following legend will show. Before the birth of the Tibetan saintly missionary P'ags-pa, who carried Mahāyana Buddhism to Mongolia and converted Emperor Kublai Khan to the new faith, in the 13th century,

---

177 *Ibid.*, p. 29.
178 *Ibid.*, p. 23.
179 Mitra, *The Nepalese Buddhist Literature*, p. 89-90 ; Bhattacharyya, *Indian Buddhist Iconography*, pp. 157-158. (London, 1924).
180 Getty, *op. cit.*, p. 52 and pl. 24 b.
181 *Ibid.*,
182 *Ibid.*, p. 53 and pl. 24 b.
183 Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 37-54 ; 67-87 and pls. 24-39.

it is said that his father invoked the assistance of Ganesa. The latter appeared to him, took him up with his trunk and carried him to the top of Mount Meru and showing him the country of Mongolia, announced to him : "Thy son will subjugate this whole country."[184]

This successful intrusion of Ganapati into the Buddhist pantheon, provoked nevertheless a reaction. He was finally shown as a demon under the feet of other deities. In Nepal he appears trodden by *Vighnāntaka,* the "Destroyer of obstacles."[185] The irony of fate ! It was Ganapati's own title ! In Nepal and Tibet he is shown under the feet of goddess *Aparājitā,* who is consequently styled *Ganapati-samākrāntā,* "she who tramples on Ganapati."[186] Again in Tibet he is also depicted under the feet of the black *Manjusri,* the Tibetan god of wisdom possessing three eyes,[187] again a title and endowment which appertained to Ganesa himself. Once more in Tibet he is shown under the feet of *Mahākāla* who crushes him "as the Hindu demon Vināyaka,"[188] thus finally coming back to the original state of his existence. This was a crushing defeat for the little elephantine god who knew only of successes in his daring career.

Yet these were not the only foreign lands visited by him. On the ships of the Hindu merchants and settlers he voyaged to the far off islands of Indonesia, Java, Borneo and Bali, where he was also worshipped by the Buddhist. Some of Ganesa's images of Java, both in stone and in bronze, are among the most ornamented icons of this god.[189].

If Ganapati has been so successful even in the realm of other religious sects, it is no wonder that he should have thriven within his own Saiva sect. His attempts at conquer-

---

184 Grünwedel, *Mythologie des Buddhismus,* pp. 64-65. (Lupzig, 1900).
185 Getty, *op. cit.,* p. 43 and pl. 43 a and b.
186 *Ibid.,* pp. 8 and 43.
187 *Ibid.,* p. 44.
188 *Ibid.,* p. 42.
189 *Ibid.,* pp. 55-66 and pls. 29-34.

ing the highest post in Saivism, by supplanting his supposed father, are clear to the student of Hindu iconography. He has, little by little, adopted all the characteristics of Siva making them his own. *Uchchhista Ganapati* is shown with the *urdhva linga,*[190] as some of the images of Ān (the prototype of Siva in the Indus Valley) and some of the Bengali images of Siva are represented.[191] Siva's third eye on the forehead appears in many statues of Ganapati : *Uchchhista Ganapati,*[192] *Haridrā Ganapati,*[193] *Laksmī Ganapati,*[194] Tantric images,[195] Nepalese images[196] and a recently discovered image at Paharpur, Bengal.[197] We have also some in our Indian Historical Research Institute museum. Siva is depicted with three faces as Mahesamūrti ; Ganesa is shown in India with two faces in icons of *Ganapati Jayanti ;*[198] and with three faces in Japan.[199] More common are, especially in Nepal, the images of *Heramba Ganapati* having five heads, four facing the four cardinal points and a fifth one on top.[200] This is precisely the very way how the five heads of Sadasiva are ranged, or at times the other way about, displaying four faces directed to the four cardinal points on a sort of hair-knot upon the head. Heramba Ganapati is usually riding on a lion, which he seems to have borrowed from Pārvati. (Fig. 16) Yet very far from Nepal in Tiruvannaikkāval, Tiruchirapalli District, a five headed Ganapati, called *Pancamukhi Ganapati,* is being worshipped. He is represented without a vehicle. We have already seen how Ganapati is very often represented with his *saktī* in the same way as Siva. Like Siva he is at

---

190 Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography,* I, 1 pt. p. 58. See one in the Nagesvaraswāmin temple, Kumbakonam.

191 Battasali. *Iconography of Buddhist and Brahmanical Sculptures,* pls. XLV, XLVI, XLIX (a) and L (1).

192 Gopinatha Rao, *loc. cit.,*

193 Getty, *op. cit.,* p. 16.

194 *Ibid.,* p. 38.

195 *Ibid.,* p. 59.

196 *Ibid.,* p. 53.

197 Dikshit, *Excavations at Paharpur in Bengal* (M. of the A. S. I.); No. 55, p. 40, pl. XXXII d.

198 Getty, *op. cit.,* p. 14.

199 *Ibid.,* pp. 14-15.

200 *Ibid.,* pp. 39-40.

times wearing a *jatā-mukuta,* viz. made with his own hair.[201] Not a few images of Ganesa both in India and abroad, in Nepal and Tibet, display him dancing in the same way as Siva when dancing the *Tāndava.* He is, as such, styled *Nrtta-Ganapati.*[202] (Fig. 17) The museum of the Indian Historical Research Institute possesses five of these images. The dance of Ganesa is totally different from the dance of Krsna, in his *Venugopal* images. Ganapati stands on one leg as Siva does. Outside one of the Siva rock-cut temples of Bādāmi, of the time of Pulikesi I, one of the earliest rock-cut temples of India, (Fig 18) there is a small figure of Ganapati, shown in a slightly dancing pose, as if he were learning how to dance from his supposed father. In fact the dance of Ganapati is Siva's dance. Finally in the same way as Siva is at times represented nude (Bhairava, Biksanamūrti, linga of Gudimallam, etc.), Ganapati is also shown nude.[203]

As regards apparel, Ganesa is also given the jewel head-dress of Siva, as well as the crescent:[204] while his hands hold Siva's symbols, the trident,[205] the *ankusa* and the rosary. In Nepal and Tibet, some images of Ganesa carry the *cintāmani,* or symbol of the germ of life,[206] whose significance is not very dissimilar from the meaning of the *linga.* In Java there is a statue of Ganesa that holds a small Nandi, the *vāhana* of Siva.[207] His hips are in India at times covered with a tiger skin, which is very dear to Siva in his role as a *yogin.* Many images of Ganapati found in Java are ornamented with skulls,[208] which is one of the symbols of Siva as the Destroyer. Just as Siva usually has the Nandi, his *vāhana,* in front of his temples, Ganapati also has temples with the

---

201 *Ibid.,* pp. 57.

202 *Ibid.,* pp. 38 and 45.

203 Banerji, *The Haiheyas of Tripuri,* (M. of the A. S. I., No. 23), pl. XXXIV; Getty, *op. cit.,* p. 19.

204 Getty, *op. cit.,* pp. 39-40, 57.

205 *Ibid.,*

206 *Ibid.,* p. 19.

207 *Ibid.,* p. 57.

208 *Ibid.,* pp. 40 and 57, pls. 30 a and 34 a and *passim.*

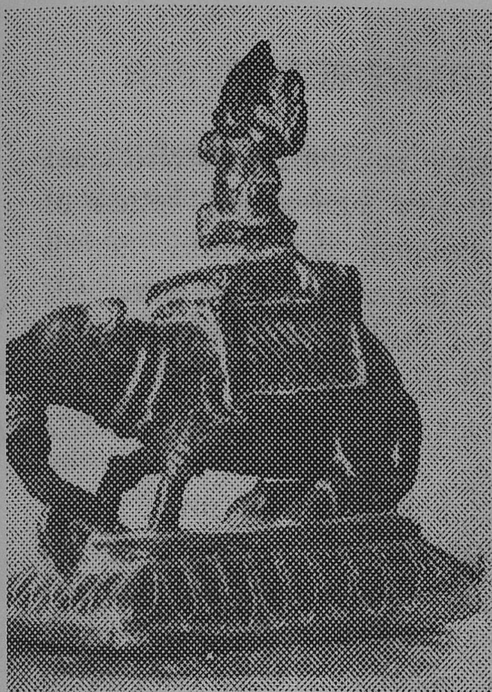


FIG. 19
Ganapati on his *Vahana*, the Rat
Indian Historical Research Institute, Bombay.

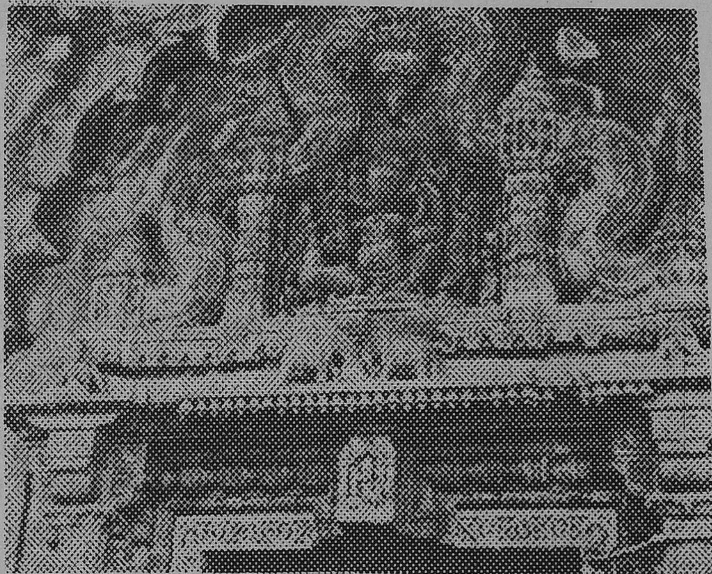


FIG. 20
Ganapati upon the entrance of Siva's shrine, Narushankar Temple, Nasik.
(Photo by Fr. J. Coll, Bombay)

186A



FIG. 21
Sivapanchayatan with Ganapati, a Naga, Anna Purna, Bala Krsr and Siva's Linga with the Nandi
Indian Historical Research Institute, Bomba



FIG. 22
Siva and Parvati with Ganapati and Shanmukha (Marble sculpture)
Indian Historical Research Institute, Bombay.



FIG. 23
Sasivikallu Ganesa from Vijayanagara, Hampi
opyright, Archaeological Survey of India.

rat in front of the entrance door. (Fig. 19) Miss Getty finally affirms in this connection : "In all countries, where he has been worshipped, images of Ganesa have been found in which he is identified with his father Siva."[209] He is also supposed to be a transformation of Bhairava.[210] Like Siva, Ganapati also is proclaimed to be the "Protector of Cowherds".[211] Popular worship impersonates him in a shapeless stone, called *svayambhū mūrtī*, in the same way as Siva himself.

Needless to say that the cult of Ganesa spread parallelly to the cult of Siva all over India. In South India, in all the Saiva temples there is a shrine dedicated to Ganesa.[212] The largest of all these temples is at Tiruchirapalli. It is called *Ucchipillayar Kōvil.* It comprises the whole area of the famous rock in the centre of the city, and the main shrine dedicated to the elephant god is on the summit of the rock. In Malabar there are special shrines where special sacrifices are offered to Vinayaka for the prosperity of the country. They are called *Ganapati Homas.* Occasionally much greater celebrations are being held at a great cost, which are called *Mahā-Ganapati Homas,* "great sacrifices of Ganapati".[213] The largest images of Ganapati are found in South India in the neighbourhood of Hampi. They belonged to the old city of Vijayanagara. One of them 20 feet high, called *Kadalaikallu* "the grain-of-gram stone" is enshrined within a beautiful Dravidian temple of almost classical appearance.[214] In its vicinity stands the other, also ironically called *Sāsivikallu,* "the mustard-seed stone." (Fig. 23) It is a monolith 30 feet high, which could not be enclosed within a temple. It is only covered by a several-plain-pillared mandapam. Both are on the saddle of the rocky hill overhanging the Pampāpati temple of

---

209 *Ibid.,* p. 40.

210 *Ibid.,* p. 13.

211 Vogel, *Indian Serpent Lore,* p. 253.; Getty, *op. cit.,* p. 32.

212 Srikanta Iyer, "The Popular view of Ganesa in Madras," *Indian Antiquary,* XXX, p. 255.

213 *Travancore State Mannual,* II, p. 51 (1906).

214 Longhurst, *Hampi Ruins,* pp. 97-98.

Hampi. Among the temples of North India we may mention one of Banaras called Sakhi Vināyak, which is the last temple visited by the pilgrims who go to the sacred city. It was built by a Maratha in 1770.[215] But the most famous temple of Ganesa in northern India is at Chinchvad, near Poona, where a kind of living incarnation of Ganesa dwells. The dignity is hereditary in the family for the last three hundred years.[216] The importance of Ganapati in the Saiva temples is evident from the fact that his images are often carved on the dedicatory block and above it at the entrance to the shrines of Siva, thus Ganapati becoming like the guard at the entrance of his supposed father's house.[217] (Fig. 20).

It is not only this public cult, but even the private personal devotion to this god that discloses the influence he has exercised in modern Hindu minds. In South India he is invoked the first of all the gods at the morning ablutions, and again at noon and at night before going to sleep.[218] Ganesa is the god whom the pious Hindu "invokes when he begins all sacrifices and religious ceremonies," says a Hindu author, "all addresses even to superior gods, all serious compositions in writing and all worldly affairs of moment".[219] "Every merchant," says another author, "enters on his business after first propitiating this deity. In marriages and in

215 Greaves, *Kashi, the City Illustrious, or Benares*, pp. 63, 81, 84; (Benares, 1909).

216 *Poona Gazetteer*, III, (1885), pp. 125-127.

217 Getty, *op. cit.*, pp. 31 and 42. Actually Ganesa is found as Dvārapala at the entrance of Buddhist monasteries in Nepal. Getty, *op. cit.*, p. 40; and above the main entrance to Buddhist and Brahmanic temples in Tibet. *Ibid.*, p. 42. In Halebidu, Mysore, his image is also seen just outside the entrance to the Hoysalesvara temple to the left.

218 Getty, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

219 Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, I, pt. 1, p. 46.

every kind of religious ceremonies Ganesa is the first god whose help is invoked".[220]

In the month of September the feast of Ganesa is celebrated through the country, as an official feast even with the honours of a 'Bank Holiday.' In the South, it is called *Vinayacavuti*; in the north *Ganesa Cathurti.* Clay or mud images of the god are installed in the houses and adored and feasted with merriment and joy. After that the image is immersed into the sea, tank or river. In the South the domestic feast lasts one day only. In Maharastra, several days, up to a fortnight. The preaching of the great Indian leader Shri Bal Gangadhar Tilak made this feast very popular in the whole of Maharastra.

Thus now Ganesa is worshipped in company of the great deities Visnu, Siva, Pārvatī and Āditya (the sun), symbol of Brahma. His image is not uncommonly found in the so-called *Sivapanchayatans*, little altars of adoration for the household (something like the old Penates for the Romans). (Fig. 21) When Ganesa is chosen as the main household god he is placed in the centre of the altar, Visnu to his right, Siva to his left, Pārvatī to the right of, or in front of, Visnu and Aditya to the left of, or in front, of Siva.

Ganesa has finally become "the most popular of all the domestic deities of India".[221] A modern Hindu writer pro-

[220] Srikanta Iyer, "The Popular view of Ganesa in Madras," *Indian Antiquary*, XXX, p. 255. This author gives a few specimens of the prayers addressed to Ganesa. This is one: "Who rides on the rat, who has a *modak* in his hand, whose ears are like fly-wisks, who wears a long sacred thread, who is dwarfish in size, who is the son of Siva, who dispels difficulties, salutation to his feet." *Ibid.*, p. 255. This is another prayer of a Brahman boy: "The elephant-faced god who is accompanied by the group of beings, who eats excellent fruits like the *kapita* and *gwaba*, the son of Umā who destroys misery, I salute the lotus of the Lord of difficulties" (*Vināyaka*). *Ibid.* As may be easily seen there are no theological conceptions at all in the wording of such prayers.

[221] Srikanta Iyer, "The Popular view of Ganesa in Madras." *Indian Antiquary*, XXX, p. 255.

claims him as "the Primordial essence ; the absolute supreme principle by which the whole universe is regulated is named Ganapati... The supreme being who protects the collection of all things is Ganapati. The leader of angels and other such beings is also called Ganapati.... He who presides over the assemblance of the transcendental and perceptible elements is Ganapati... He who rules over all the aspects of Brahma, whether manifest or unmanifest, is Ganapati".[222]

VII

SKANDA AND GANESA

And what were in the meantime the relations between Ganapati and his supposed brother Kumāra, Kārttikeya, Skanda or Subrahmanya ? Purposely we have avoided speaking of this subject in the preceding pages to study the question here as thoroughly as possible. This second son of God who appears in the purānic and epic period seems to be, let us put it clearly, an intruder. How does he behave with the *real* son of God ? That is the question. The study of Saiva myth and art will disclose many interesting revelations.

Miss Alice Getty after the study of numerous images of Ganesa, both in painting and sculpture, draws this final conclusion :—

"Pārvatī holding the child Ganesa on her lap is practically never found either in stone sculptures or in Kāngrā miniatures, for although Ganesa and Kārttikeya were often represented with Pārvatī, it is invariably Kārttikeya who is seated on her lap while Ganesa is playing beside her".[223]

This is the relative position of the two brothers in two Kāngrā paintings of the Indian Museum, London, which are worth a detailed study. In both Kārttikeya as *Shanmukha* (with six heads) is shown in Pārvati's lap.[224] In one which

---

[222] Sarasvati, "Greatness of Ganapati," *Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art,* VIII, p. 41.

[223] Getty, *Ganesa,* p. 34.

[224] *Ibid.,* pl. 10b.

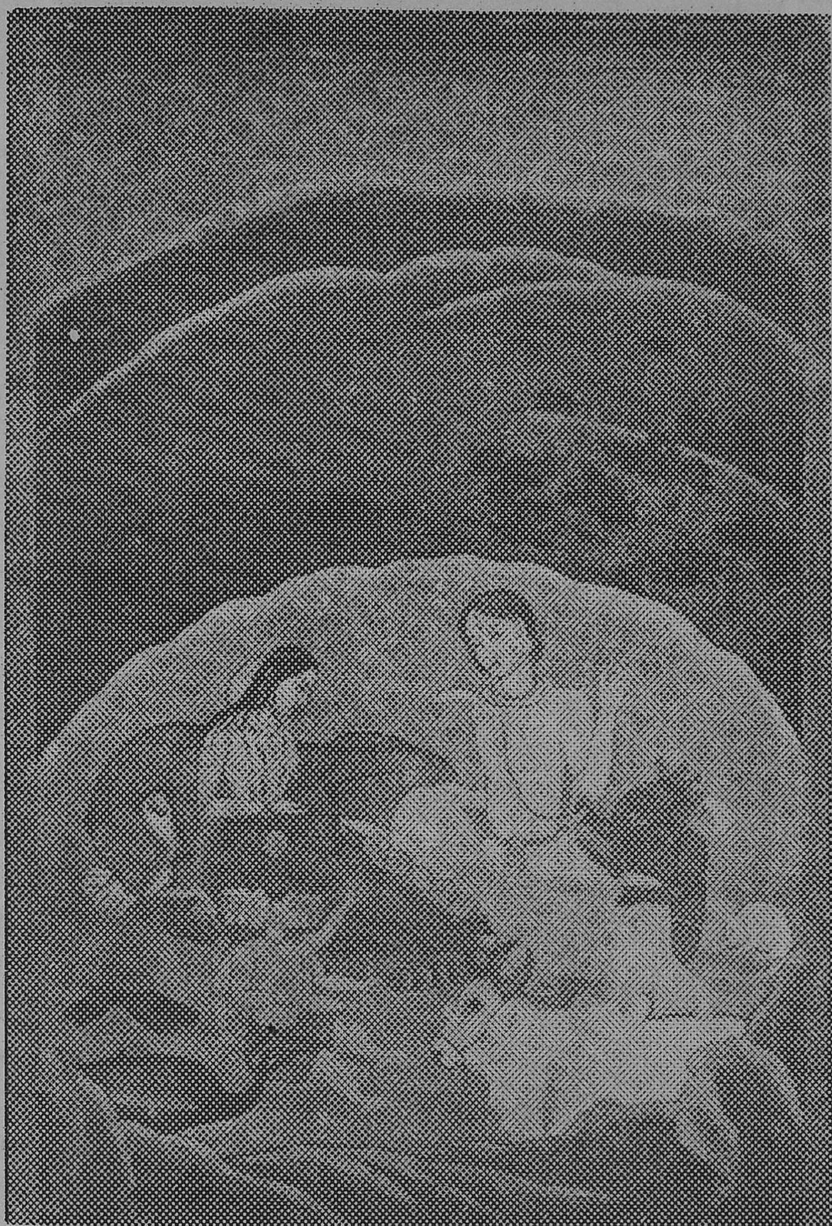


FIG. 24

Siva's Family in Mount Kailasa, Kangra Painting

Courtesy of the Director, Victoria & Albert Museum, London.



190B.

FIG. 25
Siva as Bhutesvara with Parvati,
Shanmukha and Ganapati, Kangra Painting
Courtesy of the Director, Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

depicts Siva as the Destroyer Ganapati is seated behind his father, half hidden, as if he were not daring to approach the family circle. Further still, one may see the rat, Ganapati's vehicle ; while the peacock the vehicle of Kārttikeya is perched on the branch of a tree over the cave where they are sheltered.

In the other painting there is more movement and family pathos. (Fig. 25) Siva as Bhūtesvara ("The Lord of Spirits") is shown stringing a garland of skulls which he usually wears under this denomination. Both children help the father. Ganesa, who looks taller than his brother, is standing to the left holding the string streched to facilitate the work of his father ; while Shanmukha, who is shown more developed than in the preceding picture hands over one of the skulls, picked up from a heap, to his father, wishing not to be less than Ganapati. This seems to be the real childish feeling of jealousy, for while the hand that holds the skull is directed to his father, he is unmistakably staring at his brother.

The same feeling of shame on the part of Ganesa seems to be discovered in a beautiful Rajput drawing of the British Museum. (Fig. 26) Siva nude and with matted hair as a yogin is represented leaning against the trunk of a tree. Pārvatī, dutifully, pours milk into his own cup. Behind his father, in the same family circle, Shanmukha as a boy, also nude, is offering food to his *vāhana,* the peacock, which is standing high on the trunk of the tree. In the foreground but separated from the other three one sees Ganesa, seated between the bull Nandi and a lioness. Imitating his brother he seems to have brought some of his *ladhus* to feed the *vāhanas* of his parents, but owing to his elephant's head, or to his low origin there seems to be in him some sort of inferiority complex which makes him sit, let us say, within the animal kingdom rather than on the carpet occupied by his parents and his brother. The artist of this drawing seems to have had a highly developed sense of humour.[225]

---

[225] Miss Getty, *op. cit.*, p. 35, does not seem to interpret this drawing properly.

Unlike these specimens there are numerous representations of the two brothers wherein they appear on the same level. Such is the case of another Rajput drawing of the British Museum, wherein Siva appears as *Gaṅgādhara*. While the sacred river flows from Siva's hair at the request of the sage Bhagīratha (who appears in the lower left corner of the picture), the two boys Shanmukha and Ganapati try to collect a few drops of the holy water in some little *lotas.*[226] (Also see Fig. 24).

One more painting of the collection of Miss Alice Getty, beautifully reproduced in colours in her monograph, shows the two brothers next to each other in adoration in front of Siva and Pārvatī in a *darbar* on Mount Kailāsa. Resourceful Ganapati, painted fully red, has taken his position in the first row of gods next to Brahma, leaving Shanmukha in the second row next to Krsna and Visnu.[227]

A marble sculpture of our Indian Historical Research Institute, coming from northern Gujerat displays Siva and Pārvatī in the centre, Siva having Ganga issuing from the top of his *jatā-mukuta.* (Fig. 22) To the right of Siva there is Ganapati reclining on the Nandi which appears between him and his father. Shanmukha is seen to the left of Pārvatī, having the lion, Pārvatī's *vāhana,* in front. Both Ganesa and Shanmukha appear as the dutiful children of the couple, the former looking older than the latter.

Another stone sculpture of the Dacca Museum shows the two brothers in the same position of equality. Pārvatī is lying on her left side having a child on a lotus-flower in front. That child is Siva, who, according to a purānic myth, took the shape of a babe when she came to the Assembly of Gods to choose a husband. This is clearly shown by the *linga* carved on top of the image of the goddess. To the left of the *linga* there are two small figures of Ganesa and Kārttikeya.[228]

---

226 Getty, *op. cit.,* pl. 10a.
227 Getty, *op. cit.,* frontispiece.
228 Bhattasali, *Iconography of Buddhist and Brahmanical Sculptures,* p. 138 and pls. LIII and LIV.

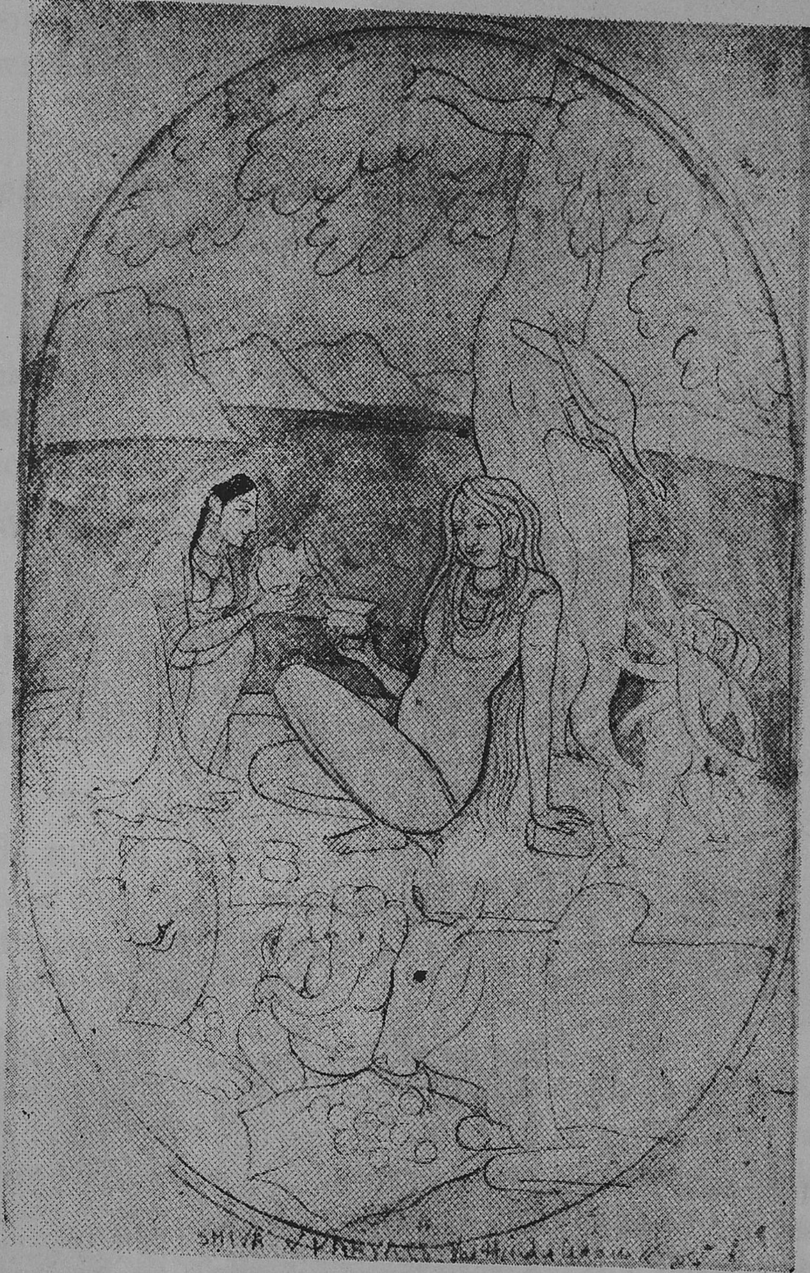


FIG 26

Siva's Family, Rajput Drawing

Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum, London.



FIG. 27
The Tandavan at Elephanta
with Karttikeya and Ganapati
to the left
Copyright,
Archaeological Survey of India.

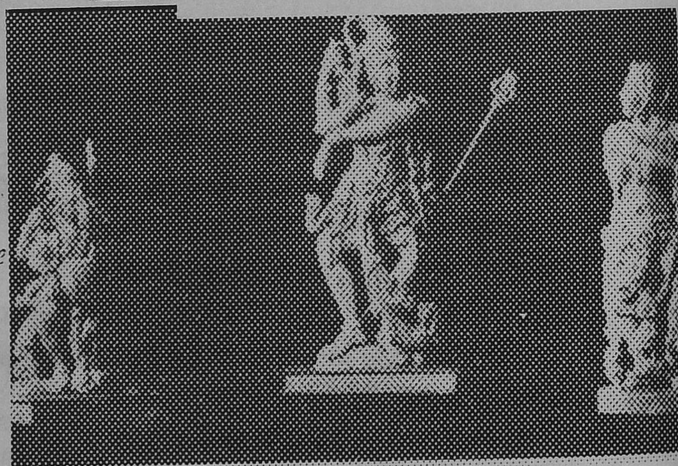


FIG. 28
iva, Parvati and Ganapati
Dancing (Ivory)
m Historical Research Institute
Bombay.

The beautiful panels of the big Saivite cave of Elephanta reproduce also the two brothers on the side of their parents, almost in every panel, (Fig. 28) the only difference from the above specimens being that in these sculptures Kārttikeya always looks older than Ganapati.

Contrary to what Miss Getty says[229] in all groups of the *saptamātrkās*, or *astamātrkās* I know, for instance the one of Elephanta, the goddesses are flanked by the two brothers.

The two brothers are also found together in the frescos of two of the caves of Bäzäklik, Chinese-Turkestan, viz. Nos. 7 and 32.[230] Two images of Ganesa and Kārttikeya were also found together in a cave at Kombeng, Borneo, showing thereby that they were combinely worshipped.[231]

Once more they are shown together attending the *parinirvāna* of the Buddha on a small fragment at Sārnāth. They are grouped with other Brahmanical deities, and Ganapati appears riding on the rat.[232]

The Hindu popular mind, accustomed to depict their gods subject to the same feelings and passions that exist among men, could not but suppose that some rivalry and bitterness must have sprang between the two brothers. This is clearly revealed in two popular stories that are narrated concerning their relations. When it was a question of their marriage their parents decided that he would marry first who would go first round the world. Subrahmanya on his peacock sportively attempted the contest; but tricky, casuistical Ganapati went round, his parents telling them that the world is typefied in Siva, Siva being the Creator of the world: "What is the world but your own holy self?" Siva approved of the statement of Ganapati, who accordingly was married forthwith. When his brother came back from his long journey,

229 Getty, *op. cit.*, pp. 11 and 27.
230 Getty, *op. cit.*, p. 41.
231 Ibid., p. 63.
232 Foucher, *Iconographie Buddhique de l'Inde*, I, fig. 30.

he was furious against his elephantine brother, and he in spite retreated to Mount Krauncha where he lived as a *brahmacārin* for the rest of his life.[233]

Another similar story concerning a pomegranate is also narrated, wherein the ill feeling of Subrahmanya against Ganesa is also clearly emphasized.[234] In point of fact Venkatakrishna Rao acknowledges that "the Purānas are replete with stories in which he (Ganesa) fought with Skanda and emerged victorious, though with the loss of his tusk.[235]

The growing importance of Ganesa in the appreciation of the people is discovered through the works of art. We have seen how Shanmukha is always depicted on Pārvati's lap in former days, but this place was finally given to Ganesa. Miss Getty mentions a Northern Indian bronze in which Ganapati is seated on the right knee of Pārvatī ; while in a very rare porcelain group the boy is seated on the left knee of Siva. We know of a painting in a temple in Vaikom, Travancore State, of the early 16th century, which displays the boy Ganapati seated on the left leg of Pārvatī.[236]

A new step in Ganapati's successful carrier is marked by the fact that in modern times when the two brothers are being mentioned, Ganapati is supposed to be the elder and Skanda the younger. The roles of both were finally exchanged. It was but natural, for as Srikanta Iyer says about Ganapati, "as the favourite son of Siva, he receives honours equal to him".[237] Mons. Jean Herbert gives a philosophical aspect of the two brothers which may perhaps explain this preference of the Indian people for the elephant-faced god : "The younger, Skanda, generally represented as the war god, one who loves violent activity, symbolizes the appeal to the brutal

---

233 Srikanta Iyer, *op. cit., Indian Antiquary,* XXX, p. 255.

234 Somasundaram Pillai, *Palni,* p. 2, n. 1. The full story will be narrated in one of the following chapters. Cf. below, p. 212.

235 Venkatakrishna Rao, "The Ganapati Cult", *QJMS.,* XILI, p. 94.

236 Kramrisch, *Drāvida and Kerala in the Art of Travancore,* pl. 41.

237 Srikanta Iyer, *op. cit.,* p. 255.

physical force as means to attain liberation ; he is not much honoured by the Hindus, who are not much in favour of such action and feel more inclined to the practice of *ahimsa* ...... The elder, Ganesa, on the other hand.... represents the appeal to the spiritual force in the course of the soul towards liberation".[238]

The fact is that in Northern India, Skanda, Kumāra or Kārttikeya is absolutely overlooked in the religious life of the people. For the majority of the people Siva has only one son and that is Ganesa or Ganapati. Accordingly he receives the titles of *Sivaputra, Sambhutanya* and *Sambhusuta.*

Two specimens of the Museum of our Indian Historical Research Institute show Ganapati in this last stage of his successful career. (Fig. 29) One is a copper image of a four-armed Siva, coming from the southern Maratha country. It is dated 18th century. The two upper hands of the god hold the trident and the *damaru* (drum). With the other two hands he embraces Pārvatī to his left and Ganesa to his right, who are thus seated on his legs.

The other specimens is a very modern one. (Fig. 28) It is a group in ivory imitating the statues of the Hoysala school of sculpture representing Siva, Pārvatī and Ganapati dancing. It has been carved by Shri Anandu Manjanath Shetty, a teacher of the Sir J. J. Jeejibhoi School of Art, Bombay.

We have been studying the sudden rise of Ganesa in the Indian pantheon, his early humble appearance, his daring attempts against Skanda, his final ousting him from popular Hindu mind and worship. His whole career is a great mystery which we shall try to unravel in the following pages. Perhaps the secret of this mystery had to be counted amongst those which could not be pronounced in front of Ganesa and Skanda themselves, as narrated in the *Mahānirvāna-tantra.* Pārvatī

---

238 Herbert, *Ganesa, précédé d'une étude sur Dieu chez les Hindus,* p. 23. (Lyon, 1946.)

much troubled with doubts and mind obscurity once approached Siva and said : "Who else but thee, O Lord of the three Worlds, is able to solve these doubts of mine? Thou who knowest all." Siva then replied : "What is that thou sayest, O Great Wise one and Beloved of my heart? I will tell you anything, be it ever so bound in mystery, even that which should not be said before Ganesa and Skanda.[239]

The *Skanda-Purāna* reveals the deep feeling of the votaries of Skanda against the growing cult of Ganesa, when it depicts the crowds of unworthy people, *sūdras* and barbarians worshipping Siva at Somnāth in order to attain to the heavens of the *devas*. The minor deities headed by Indra protested to Mahesvara. The latter then created Vināyaka, the "Lord of Obstacles" to impede those low people to enter heaven.

VIII

THE STORY OF GANESA'S ORIGINS

Several theories have been advanced to explain the origin of Ganesa, as he is the only animal-headed god in the Indian Pantheon.[240]

It has been supposed that Ganesa is a *Yaksa*,[241] *i.e.* one of the demigods attending on Kuvera.

It is mostly admitted that the lower part of his thick-set body may be the body of a *yaksa*[242]; but as a whole Ganesa is not a *yaksa* in the least : none of his names are found on *yaksa* lists,[243] nor is he associated with *yaksas* in any purānic myth.[244]

---

239 Avolan, *The Great Liberation*, (Second Ed.), p. 5 (Madras, 1927)

240 The animal *avatāras* of Visnu, Fish, Tortoise, Boar, Lion, are of a different character. They are only manifestations of God. The *vāhanas* are not gods.

241 Coomaraswamy, *Yaksa*, Part 1, pp. 7-14.

242 Deb, "The Durga Pooga: a Federation of Divinities," *Calcutta Municipal Gazzette*, 1932, October.

243 Getty, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

244 *Ibid.*, p. 27.

Miss Getty is inclined to believe that "he was primarily the totem of a Dravidan tribe".[245] But there is no evidence concerning the existence or such totem. There certainly existed in India the tribe of the *Gājas* or Kasas, who very likely had an elephant as their *lāncana*, but there was never a composite *lāncana* partly human and partly animal, resembling the figure of the elephant god.[246]

Similarly it has been said that he originally belonged to an animal cult.[247] And Miss Getty seems to like the theory "since his image is found in Hindu temples worshipped in company with the animal avatars of Visnu".[248] But there is no clear evidence of any animal worship in ancient India. The very serpents were never worshipped, but propitiated only.

Some authors believe that Ganesa was originally "a Dravidian deity worshipped by the aboriginal populations of India".[249] We must say first of all that the so-called aboriginal populations of India are different from the Dravidians. There is certainly not the least evidence of such a divinity in the Proto-Dravidian cities of the Indus Valley; nor have anthropologists ever brought forward such an elephantine god from any aboriginal tribe.

A South Indian legend describes him as a demi-god who threw his broken tusk to a giant demon named Gajamukhāsura; the latter forthwith became a rat which was taken by Ganesa as his *vāhana*.[250] The early stages of the career of Ganapati which were described above show him

---

245 *Ibid.*, p. 1.

246 The rat, Ganesa's *vāhana*, seems to have been a totem among the Mundas and other aboriginal tribes of Chota Nagpur. Cf. Risley, *Tribes and Castes of Bengal*, II, p. 113 (1891).

247 Crooke, *The Popular Religidn and Folk-lore of Northern India*, I, p. 184.

248 Getty, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

249 *Ibid.*

250 Jouveau-Dubreuil, *Archeologie du Sud de l'Inde*, II, p. 44 (Paris, 1914).

indeed in this character of demi-god of the legend, but this does not explain his origin in the least.

Nor is the opinion of those who call him a "Dravidian Sun-god" satisfactory. Certainly the Proto Dravidians worshipped the Sun, but it was identified with Ān, the Lord, the Proto-type of Siva. Nor had any of the eight forms of Ān any shape similar to an elephant.

Very recently Mr. T. G. Aravamuthan has propounded the theory that though Ganesa as worshipped now is not found in Vedic works he is "in spirit" in the very *Rgveda,* because his powers and names are associated with the Maruts-Rudra-Brhaspati- Indra conceptions.[251] Yet his argumentation is faulty, because since Ganapati was admitted to the Hindu pantheon, he naturally was in the course of time given different powers which were conceived as divine powers from very ancient days ; but this is on no account a proof that Ganesa is a very ancient Hindu deity as he affirms.

All these opinions about the origin of Ganesa which we have recorded try to explain the beginnings of this puzzling god by facts which are obscure and unknown, as the nature of the *yaksas* and of the totems, and the prevalence of animal cult in the aboriginal rites. It is not a satisfactory method. An unknown thing must be explained by well known facts and clear ideas. Otherwise the mystery increases and the problem becomes more entangled. We shall follow this method.

Of the three names that are given to the son of Ān (the proto-type of Siva) in the inscriptions of the Indus Valley there is one which, as seen above, doubtlessly identifies him with Skanda = Subrahmanya. That name is *Murugan,* the oldest Dravidian name of Subrahmanya. But there is another name which is worth studying while looking into the origins

251 Aravamuthan, "Ganesa: Clue to a Cult and a Culture" *Journal of Oriental Research,* XVIII (1949), pp. 226-230, 233.

of Ganesa. Murugan is also called *Ānil*. What is the meaning of this name ?

Ānil simply means "the Son of Ān." It is a clear confession of the divine filiation of Murugan. But *āne* may also mean "elephant," and the suffix *il* added to a noun (now *il* has become *in*) means "of." Thus *āneil* would mean "of the elephant." This compound word, after the usual vowel elimination, becomes *ānil*. So the name Ānil besides meaning "the son of Ān" may also mean "of the elephant." This double meaning of this name seems to have been the origin of Ganapati. That this meaning was understood for some time in connection with Ganesa, the Sanskrit name of this god *Gajasya* clearly shows. Gajasya means "of the elephant." It is a perfect translation of *ānil*.

This meaning given to the name Ānil was the cause of the production of images of the son of Ān having an elephant's head. Naturally the whole figure could not be an elephant, because the son of Ān was the son of God, and God was conceived and represented in human form. The image therefore was the image of a god, in human form, having the face or head of an elephant. A series of names, both in Dravidian and in Sanskrit shows this composite nature of this new production. They are all names by which Ganesa is mentioned :-

Dravidian :	*Anaimukavar*,	"One with the face of elephant"
Sanskrit :	*Nāgānana*,	"One having the face of elephant"
	Gajānana	Ditto
	Gajāsya	Ditto
	Hastinmalla	"One who has the cheek and temples of an elephant"
	Gajamukha	"One having the face of an elephant"
	Karimukha	Ditto
	Gajavaktra	Ditto
	Gajavadana	Ditto

This new image adorned with the face of an elephant was not, it is understood, in the beginning, a new son of Ān, different from Murugan. It was the same Murugan, the only son of Ān, with a new appearance, with a new face,

This phenomenon of face changing is hinted at in several myths concerning Ganesa. Pārvatī, it is said, was in despair for not having had offspring from Siva. After many prayers and sacrifices she heard a voice from heaven which advised her to betake herself to her appartments where she would find her son. She full of joy ran to her own room where she found a beautiful youth whom she and Siva accepted as their son. To commemorate this great event they celebrated a feast to which they invited all the gods. All were admiring the beautiful youth, excepting Sani (Saturn) who had his eyes fixed persistently on the ground. Pārvatī could not stand this indifference. She bade him gaze upon her son. Hardly had he raised his eyes when the head of the youth was converted into ashes. Great was the consternation in that assembly of gods; but Visnu, mounting on Garuda, his *vāhana,* flew to the banks of the river Puspabhadra, where he found an elephant asleep. He cut off his head; flew back to where the gods were assembled and putting the head on the shoulders of the beheaded youth, return him to life.[252]

Another story says that Siva himself cut off the youth's head while fighting with him not knowing that he was the son of Pārvatī. Then on learning the truth he ordered the *devas* to cut off the head of the first being they would find near by, which happened to be an elephant, and placing that head on the headless trunk, Ganesa was produced.[253]

A third myth says that after the emanation of this son of Siva from his mind, when Pārvatī saw him produced without her participation, she cursed him; as a result of this curse, the elephant's face appeared.[254]

These three stories clearly show that the god whom we now call Ganesa had originally a man's head, which was at a later period substituted for the head of an elephant.

---

252 *Brahmavaivarta Purana.*

253 *Siva Purāna.*

254 *Varāna Purāna,* Cf. below, p. 207

Who made this substitution ? or in other words : Who were the first who produced images of Murugan with the head of an elephant ?

Besides the so-called aboriginal tribes of India and the Dravidians who appeared at a later period, there was in India an ancient nation of very high civilization, of extraordinary intellectual attainments which we have now to acknowledge as one of the foundations of Indian culture. That is the Nāga nation.[255] The Nāgas, or Serpents, were spread all over India. A number of tribes are now acknowledged as Nāga tribes: the *Garudas* (hawks), the *Makaras* (crocodiles)[256] and the *Gajas* (elephants) undoubtedly belonged to this race. In fact the word *nāga* also means "elephant" in Sanskrit.

The idea of giving the head of an elephant to Skanda, the God of War, according to the meaning of the name Ānil, is not so extraordinary after all. "The elephant", says Dr. Gokhale, "is one of the most celebrated animals in the literature of ancient India. His strength, majesty and wisdom and also his terrible madness are of common reference in literary texts".[257] Socially the elephant was considered one of the most useful animals in creation, and even from the aesthetic point of view the elephant is held as a type of beauty down to the present.

It is not therefore strange that one day was set appart every year in Ancient India to commemorate all these excellent qualities of this pachyderm. The feast was called *Natti-mahā*. It was the feast of the elephant.[258] Accordingly

[255] The present writer after protacted studies in that ancient period is now fully convinced that the *Nāgas* were different from the Dravidians, though they were soon mixed with them. Nāga traditions and recollections are faithfully recorded in the *Mahābhārata*.

[256] *Mahābhārata*, Ādi Parva, 1235-1303. Cf. Heras, *Studies in Proto-Indo-Mediterranean Culture*, I, pp. 361-395.

[257] Gokhale, 'Some Obscure Cults." *J.B.B.R.A.S.*, XXVII, p. 170. Cf. Blochmann, *Aīn-i-Akbari*, I, p. 121.

[258] Commentary on the Pāli Jātaka, No. 455.

the four genii who were supposed to support the heavens had the shape of elephants, creatures of great strength. These four *dig-gajas* were probably at a later period identified with the four *Vināyakas,* or demons who created obstacles, about whom we spoke above. In a place called Ghatiyālā, 22 miles north of Jodhpur, there is a column on whose top there are four images of Ganapati facing the four quarters of the earth. Evidently they are the four *dig-gajas.* And yet the inscription engraved on the column opens with an obeisance made to Vināyaka.[259]. The four so-called Ganapatis are therefore the four *dig-gajas* and the four Vināyakas.[260] There was besides the giant-demon called Gajamukhāsura, "demon with the face of an elephant," whom Ganapati defeated, as seen above.

All this elephant mythology was most likely the product of the activity of the *Gajas,* the Nāga tribe of ancient India. It is our considered opinion that the first images of Skanda or Murugan having the face of an elephant were imagined and produced by sculptors of this tribe. And it was after the production of these images, when they were numerous all round, that some stories about the origin of this elephant god sprang among the people. This Ānil or Gajasya was the son of an elephant to whom Pārvatī had given a potion of her own confection. Pārvatī claimed the child as her own offspring, and Siva accepted him as a son of Pārvatī.[261] The popular mind realized that Siva had already Murugan as a son. He could not have another. This elephant-faced boy was declared to be the son of Pārvatī, and a queer son, at that.

Yet this was to admit that Ānil=Gajasya was different from Murugan. There were therefore two gods, one the son

---

259 ***Epigraphia Indica,* IX, pp. 277 ff. (Bhandarkar, *Vaisnavism* p. 148-9)**

260 **Although the date of the inscription is very late, viz 862 A.D., they figures and the invocation may chrystalize an earlier idea descended to the people of the 9th century by tradition.**

261 **Jacobi, "Brahmanism," in Hastings, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics,* p. 807,**

of Siva, the other the son of Pārvatī. Yet a new myth proclaimed the new elephant god to be the son of both. Siva himself is introduced explaining to Ganesa why he is *Gajānana*: "I, in company with Pārvatī once retired to the forest on the slopes of the Himālaya to enjoy each other's company, when we saw a female elephant making herself happy with a male elephant. This excited our passion and we decided to enjoy ourselves in the form of elephants. I became a male elephant and Pārvatī a female elephant and we pleased ourselves; as a result you were born with the face of an elephant".[262]

We may besides recollect the fact that according to the myth related above, when Ganapati lost his original head by the destructive influence of the gaze of Sani, the one who brought the elephant head to the beheaded boy was Visnu. Now Visnu has in modern times been acknowledged as a non-Āryan god[263]; and owing to his many connections with Nāgas (Sesa-Bhagvan, Kurmāvatāra, Varāhāvatāra, etc) we may probably assign a Nāga origin to him.[264] This is again a new connection between Ganapati and the Nāgas.

All this development of the figure and myth of Ganesa, seems to have taken place within the Nāga nation. Traces of this Nāga participation in the early evolution of Ganapati may be easily discovered in the later images of this god. The majority of these images bear one of two snakes round the belly and round the neck of Ganesa. (Fig. 23) Miss Getty refers to "the serpent Sesa (one of the famous Nāgas of epic reputation) adopted in Nepal for certain representations of Ganesa in dancing attitude".[265] Besides she publishes a drawing of a metal image of Ganapati worshipped by the esoteric sects, that has a five-headed *nāga* overshadowing his head.[266]

---

262 Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*; I, pt. 1, p. 53.

263 Cf. Hornell, "The Chank shell Cult of India," *Antiquity, XVI*, pp. 113-133; Prziluski, "The name of the God Visnu and the Krsna-Legend," *Q. J. M. S.*, XXV, pp. 39-48.

264 Cf. Zimmer, *Mythis and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization*, pp. 59-68.

265 Getty *op. cit.*, p. 39 and pl. 18c.

266 *Ibid.*, p. 17.

In the collection of images of Ganapati, of the Museum of our Indian Historical Research Institute, we have several specimens (Figs. No. 31, 32) one of them very primitive, with a *Nāga* spreading its hood over the head of the icon. In another image the heads of two *nāgas* appear from behind the elbow of the two arms of the god.

Miss Getty also notes that when the images of Ganapati are found in the open under trees or in the fields are very often accompanied by Nāga slabs.[267]

We may also remark here that the image of Ganapati is associated with crocodiles both in Ellora[268] and in Burma.[269] The tribe of the Makaras is one of the ancient Nāga tribes.

That the Nāgas were well acquainted with Ganapati is well proved by the fact that even Nāga kings were named after him. One of the kings dethroned by Samudra Gupta after returning from his southern expedition was called Ganapatināga.[270]

IX

GANAPATI'S CONNECTIONS WITH SKANDA

Inspite of the extraordinary development of Ganapati, his cult and his myths in the course of centuries, we may still trace numerous traits of his original days when he was one with Murugan = Skanda. Those original characteristics of Skanda have been inherited by Ganapati and have been kept round him with very suggestive persistency. We shall study these traits presently.

---

267 *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

268 Cf. Burgess, *Report on the Ellora Cave Temples*, pl. XXX, fig. 2.

269 Getty, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

270 Allahabad Pillar inscription of Samudra Gupta: Fleet, *Gupta Inscriptions*, p. 6.



FIG. 29
Siva with Parvati and Ganapati
Indian Historical Research Institute, Bom



FIG. 30
Three Eyed Ganesa standing with a Naga coiled round his belly
Indian Historical Research Institute, Bombay.

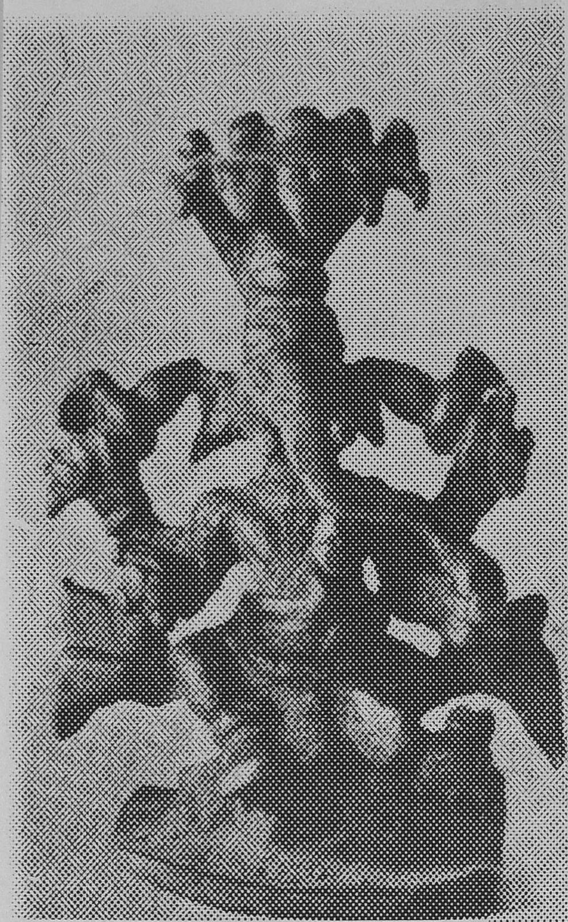


FIG. 31
Primitive Ganesa protected with the hood of a Five-Headed Naga
Indian Historical Research Institute, Bombay

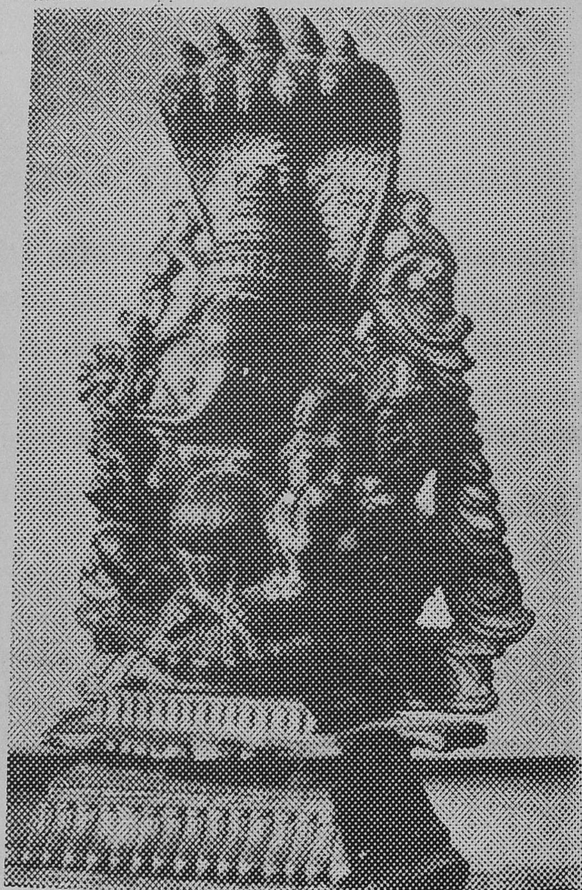


FIG. 32
Ganesa and his Sakti covered with the hood of a Five-Headed Naga
Indian Historical Research Institute, Bombay

1. Names of Ganapati

(*a*) *Pillayar.* This is a Tamil name of Ganapati. It means "Noble Child." This is exactly the meaning of the Sanskrit word *Kumāra,* one of the names of Skanda.[271]

(*b*) *Makan.* Another Dravidian name meaning "son." It is also the meaning of Kumāra.

(c) *Vināyaka.* It means "Lord of obstacles," but the *Vāmana Purāna* gives another meaning, viz. *Vi-nāyaka,* "One who has no Lord".[272] This is precisely the meaning of the word *Anīsa* which the *Svetāsvatara Upanisad* gives to the Son of God.[273]

(*d*) *Ganapati,* "the Lord of Ganas." Kārttikeya or Skanda is supposed to be the Lord of the heavenly hosts in his fight against the *asuras.*

(*e*) *Visvaksena.* This is a title Ganapati is given in some Vaisnava temples of South India.[274] It means "the Lord of all" *Cf.* (*d*).

2. Position of Ganapati

Generally he is shown seated but Miss Getty remarks that "in his most ancient images he was more often figured standing".[275] (Fig. 31) The Madras Museum has a beautiful specimen of a standing Ganapati. (See fig. 25) Such images

---

271 Prof. Bagchi, "Some Linguistic Notes", *I.H.Q.*, IX, p. 263, says that this is not the original meaning of the word *pillaiyar,* for in *Pāli* the word *pillaka means* "a young elephant." Hence according to him *pille* originally meant "the young of the elephant." *Pillaka* does not mean "the young of the elephant" in Pālli, but "the young one". In the "Vaddhakisūkanajātaka" the *sūkanapillake* is mentioned, *i.e.,* "the young of the pig." *The Jātaka,* II, p. 406. The word *pilla* in Palli is evidently derived from Dravidian.

272 *Vāmana Purāna* Cf. Aravamuthan, "Ganesa: Clue to a Cult and a Culture", *Journal of Oriental Research,* XVIII (1949), pp. 229 and 241.

273 Cf. above, p. 157.

274 Srikanta Iyer, *op. cit.,* p. 255.

275 Getty, *op. cit.,* p. 19.

are called *Prasanna Ganapati,* when he is shown perfectly erect. The Museum of our Indian Historical Research Institute has also some specimens. The images of Murugan or *Palni Kurinji Andavar,* which are some of the oldest images of Subrahmanya, show him always erect in this position.

3. The arms of Ganapati

In India it is customary to represent the gods with four or more arms. Ganapati is often shown with four, six, eight, ten and more arms ; but a number of very primitive images of Ganapati, following the type of the carving of the Mantaka Cetinga stūpa of Ceylon, are two armed only. Miss Getty publishes four of them which are very characteristic. One is Singhalese, two are from the Nahar Collection, Calcutta, a fourth one is in the British Museum.[276] The Museum of the Indian Historical Research Institute has one image with two arms only, which is not so early. (Fig. 34) His left hand is in abhaya-mudrā. We consider it to be a South Indian specimen dated 16th cent. It is an atavic manifestation of an early form. The earliest images of Skanda as Kurinji Andavar have always two hands only. So is the stone carving from Banaras described above. Apparently the early Ganapati had two arms in the same way as Skanda

4. The five heads of Ganapati.

The images of Ganesa as Heramba having five heads have already been described, four in the four directions of the earth, and the fifth above ; but we know one coming from Munshiganj District, Dacca, which has the five heads in the same tier, as the six heads of Shanmukha.

5. Ganesa red

We have seen how Skanda is called "the Red God." The images of Ganapati are supposed to be painted red. In the Rajput watercolours Ganapati is always painted red, at least his face.

---

276 Getty, *op. cit.,* pls. 2b ; 13b and d ; 13a.

6. Ganapati the Son of the Mind of Siva

Certain Hindu sects look upon Ganesa as born from Siva's mind, so as to be "the personification of Siva's divine *manas* or mind".[277] One of the myths recorded in purānic literature is a crystallization of this idea. It is said that while Siva was immersed in profound thought, a great radiance issued from his forehead and there sprang into existence a wonderful youth endowed with all the qualities of Siva. When goddess Umā saw this Son of Siva created without her participation he pronounced the following curse: "May thy head resemble that of an elephant, and thy body be deformed by a huge belly." This curse was accepted by Siva and the elephant-faced dwarfish Ganesa is the result of it.[278]

This myth reflects the vedic ideas concerning the filliation of God's son; he is mind-born without the participation of any goddess. This son of God, moreover, endowed with all the qualities of Siva, was "a second himself," to use the expression of the *Satapatha Brāhmana.*

7. Ganapati the God of Wisdom

(We saw how Murugan or Skanda, being born from the mind of God, was supposed to be "the Universal Guru." Ganapati is called "the God of Wisdom".[279] He is also styled *Kavim Kavinam Vipratamam,* "the wisest of the wise".[280] He is, in fact, supposed to be a "fountain of knowledge", "beaming forth light and knowledge".[281] In many of his statues one of his hands holds the *modaka,* a large cake which is the symbol of *Mahā-Buddhi* (Supreme Wisdom)[282] In some of the Vaisnava temples of South India

---

277 Getty, *op. cit.,* p. 52.

278 *Varāha Purāna.*

279 Srikanta Iyer, *op. cit.,* p. 255, Cf. Bhandarkar, *Vaisnavism, Saivism and other Minor Sects,* p. 149. Bhandarkar's view nevertheless does not seem to be correct.

280 Venkatakrishna Rao, "The Ganapati Cult", *Q.J.M.S.,* XLI (1949), p. 98.

281 *Ibid.,* p. 99.

282 Getty, *op. cit.,* p. 18.

Ganapati is worshipped under the denomination of *Tumbikkai Alwar,* which means "the Sage with the elephant's tooth". In the same way as in the case of Sanatkumāra he is also surrounded by brilliancy and light. One of his titles in Nepal is *Sūrya Ganapati.*[283] The very head of an elephant with which he is endowed is said to be an emblem of sagacity.[284]

Ganesa, therefore, being the god of wisdom is supposed to be "the Patron of letters.[285] He is, as such, invoked in the beginning of any writing to insure literary success.[286] "Almost all the standard works in the Sanskrit and vernacular languages begin with an invocation of the help of this God of Wisdom".[287] In fact all Hindu books generally commence with these words : *Ganesāya namah,* "Reverence to Ganesa." In many parts of South India and especially in Travancore State, children on being put to school begin their writing lesson with a similar invocation : *Harih Shrī Ganapataya namah,* "Hari, Reverence to the Holy Ganapati".[288] Some of his images represent him holding a book.

Ganapati, being the Patron of all literary, work, easily became himself a scribe, an as such he has been represented writing (at times using his own broken tusk as stylus) in India,[289] Nepal [290] and Indo-China.[291] In the *Mahānirvāna-tantra* he is described as writing down the Tantras at the dictation of his father Siva. In the same way he is said to have been writing the *Mahābhārata* at the dictation of

---

283 *Ibid.,* pp. 1 and 39.

284 Srikanta Iyer, *op. cit.,* p. 255.

285 Getty, *op. cit.,* p. 5.

286 *Ibid.,* p. 23.

287 Srikanta Iyer, *op. cit.,* p. 255.

288 *Travancore State Manual,* II, p. 51.

289 Getty, *op. cit.,* 4.

290 *Ibid.,*

291 *Ibid.,* p. 18. In Egypt, the Egyptian got Tooth, the second god of the triad of Thebes, himself also considered as the God of Wisdom, is also depicted as a scribe and supposed to be the inventor of writing and patron of letters. (Cf. Getty, *op. cit.,* pl. 1a).



FIG. 33
Standing Ganapati
Courtesy of the Curator, Madras Museum



FIG. 34
Two-Armed Seated Ganapati
with his left hand in Abhaya-Mudra
Indian Historical Research Institute, Bombay.



208 B

FIG. 35
Ganapati seated on the Rat, this being upon the Peacock, Kumara's *vahana*

Indian Historical Research Institute, Bombay

Vyāsa.[292] It is narrated that while Vyāsa was praying to Brahma asking for help to write his poem, Ganesa appeared to him. He offered himself to Vyāsa to write the whole poem at his dictation; a task which he accomplished with extraordinary speed.[293] There is a Rajput painting showing this scene in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.[294]

His character of God of Wisdom makes him also connected with agriculture,[295] as the latter is the fruit of wisdom. His title of *Vighnesvara,* "Lord of Obstacles", is also founded upon wisdom, for wisdom, surpasses all difficulties. The same is the origin of his other name *Siddhidātā,* "Bestower of Success."

8. Ganesa a Brahmacarin

He was supposed to be a Brahmacārin, according to an ancient tradition.[296] So was also Murugan. But legend gave him two consorts Buddhi (wisdom) and Siddhi (success). The latter is some times called Riddhi (perfection). Such was also the final fate of Subrahmanya.

9. Ganesa worshipped in the Mountains

An inscription of Champa speaks of a donation made to Ganesa of Candanagiri (*i.e.* "the Sandal Mountain").[297] In fact there exists a tradition in India that his cult is practised

---

292 Al Bīrūnī, *India,* (Translated by Sachau), I, p. 134.

293 Winternitz, *History of Indian Literature,* I, p. 468, n. 4, opines that the passage containing this legend in some copies of the epic is an interpolation. The legend does not seem to be earlier than the 9th century.

294 Coomaraswamy, in *Bulletin of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts,* XXVI, p. 30.

295 Cf. Gupte, "Harvest festivals in honour of Gauri and Ganesh," *Indian Antiquary,* XXXV, 1906, p. 36.

296 Getty, *op. cit.,* p. 35. "La couleur rouge de son corps est celle que donne aux grandes yogins la pratique intense de la meditation." Herbert, *Ganesa,* p. 27.

297 Bergaigne, *Inscriptions Sanscrites de Campā,* p. 362.

in mountains, a tradition which accompanied him from India to Japan. Such is also the cult of Murugan.[298]

10. A NEW VAHANA OF GANAPATI

Though the rat is supposed to be the *vāhana* of Ganapati, yet at times he is also represented riding on a peacock, *mayūra*, the *vāhana* of Kumāra. On such occasions he is styled *Mayūraganapati.*[299] An image in the Museum of the Indian Historical Research Institute displays him riding on his rat, who is likewise placed on the peacock of Kumāra. The rat is busily engaged eating a *ladhu* of his master, as he is not engaged in locomotion (Fig. 35).

11. THE DIGNITY OF GANAPATI

The main dignity of Ganapati, his essential character I should say, is that he is the Lord and Leader of the *ganas*. Even this character seems to have been usurped, for Kumāra had also been the Lord of the *ganas* before him. So Ganapati seemed to have been promoted to the position of the leader of the *ganas*, which Skanda had held so far.[300]

Ganesa therefore was originally the same as Ānil=Murugan. The different shape his images took at an early period was the cause of the later differentiation. Yet this second god kept many characteristics of the first.

X

TRUTH ABOUT GANESA'S BIRTH

The myths of the birth of Ganesa, in the midst of much useless folliage, discover some extraordinary truths in their background which are worth serious consideration owing to its persistency.

---

298 Getty, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

299 Venkatakrishna Rao, "The Ganapati Cult", *Q.J.M.S.*, XLI, pp. 95 and 96.

300 *Ibid.*, pp. 93-94. Cf. above, p. 174.

1. Ganesa made by Parvati without the intervention of Siva.

One legend says that Pārvatī after gently rubbing her body caused a youth to be produced, who had four arms and the head of elephant.[301]

Another story relates that Pārvatī made Ganapati out of the impurities of her own body giving him the face of an elephant; but it was only a lifeless figure. Then she sprinkled it with the water of the Ganges, which communicated life to it.[302]

In a third story which we have already related Ganapati is said to be the son of an elephant to whom Pārvatī gave a potion to drink.[303]

One of the carvings of Elephanta seems to represent the birth of Ganesa in Mount Kailāsa. A nurse carries the little elephant child to Pārvatī who is seated on the same level as Siva but at a certain distance from him as showing some disagreement.[304] The artist evidently wanted to show the Siva had nothing to do with the birth of the elephant god. The sculpture is much damaged, but even as it is the picture is full of feeling.

2. Ganesa produced without the intervention of Siva and Parvati

We have already narrated the purānic story that relates the appearance of Ganapati as a beautiful youth in the private apartments of Pārvatī. He was finally accepted as their son by Siva and Pārvatī.[305]

---

301 *Skanda Purāna*
302 *Mātsya Purāna*
303 Cf. above, p. 202.
304 Cf. Sastri, *A Guide to Elephanta*, pp. 45-46.
305 Cf. above, p. 200.

Even in far-off Nepal the advent of Ganesa was supposed to have taken place without the intervention of Siva and Pārvatī, for he, of his own accord, became visible in a ray of sunshine. The Brāhmans sayed that he appeared in this shape as an incarnation of the son of Brahma.[306]

Thus purānic myths and popular legends testify to the falsehood laying behind the popular belief, that Ganapati is the son of Siva. Not only Siva cannot be called the father of Ganesa, but not even Pārvatī herself may be called his real mother; for even in the two cases, which emphasize the non-intervention of Siva, the action of Pārvatī in relation to Ganesa is not generation in the least, but a mere external production.

On the contrary there is a South Indian story which is narrated to explain the name of Palni, the main shrine of Subrahmanya, which accidentally shows that the only and real son of Siva was Murugan or Skanda. Once upon a time, they say, Siva had a beautiful fruit in his hand, *pala* "fruit." (It happened to be a pomegranate). His two sons Skanda and Ganapati wanted the fruit each one for himself with exclusion of the other. In order to settle the dispute Siva told them that the fruit would be given to the first who would go round the world. Skanda ascended his mount, the peacock, and started his long journey. Ganesa, on his rat, considered himself totally unfit to compete with the peacock of his brother. Accordingly he went round Siva himself, saying: "Thou art the world." Siva much pleased with the sagacity of Vināyaka, gave him the fruit. When after many years, Skanda arrived he was very angry against his brother who had won the contest owing to a trick. But Siva told him. "Do not be angry for having lost the fruit. Thou art the fruit. *Pala-ni.*" Skanda is therefore the real fruit of Siva, Ganapati is not his fruit, that is, his son.

---

306 Lévi, *Le Népal*, II, p. 384-8. It may be remembered that Sanatkumāra is also said to have appeared to Mārkandeya in a ray of the Sun, Cf, above, p. 163-164.

XI

CONCLUSION

Ganapati is a deity without a foundation in the Veda. He has supplanted his supposed brother and has the tendency of supplanting his own father, Siva. In fact he was actually succeeded in his attempt, in some quarters.

The very character of the development of his person, his myth and his cult discovers the doubtful beginnings of his existence. He puts on the apparel of other gods and prides over the raiment borrowed from others. But in the midst of all this confusion created by his deeds, one discovers a few facts which unveil his life of mystery :—

1. In the period which we may call the pre-history of Ganapati, he had not the head of an elephant. His face was the face of a beautiful youth.

2. The appearance of the head of an elephant seems to have been due to the action of the Nāgas.

3. He keeps many characteristics of his supposed brother Skanda ; one, most important, being that he is the son of the mind of Siva, without any female intervention.

4. Yet in this elephantine form he is clearly said not to be the son either of Siva or of Pārvatī.

5. While comparing him with Skanda or Subrahmanya, the latter is the only son of Siva.

XI

CONCLUSION

Ganapati is a deity without a foothold in the Veda. He has supplanted his supposed brother and has the tendency of supplanting his own father, Siva. In fact he was actually successful in his attempt, in some quarters.

The very character of the development of his person, his myth and his cult discovers the doubtful beginnings of his existence. He puts on the apparel of other gods and prides over the rumour borrowed from others. But in the midst of all this confusion created by his deeds, one discovers a few facts which unveil his site of mystery:—

1. In the period which we may call the pre-history of Ganapati, he had not the head of an elephant. His face was the face of a beautiful youth.

2. The appearance of the head of an elephant seems to have been due to the action of the Nāgas.

3. He keeps many characteristics of his supposed brother Skanda; one most important being that he is the son of the semen of Siva, without any female intervention.

4. Yet in this elephantine form he is clearly said not to be the son either of Siva or of Pārvatī.

5. While comparing him with Skanda or Subrahmanya, the latter is the only son of Siva.



Somaskander Siva

VOL. III NOS. 3 & 4 OCTOBER, 1954

TAMIL CULTURE

A Quarterly Review dedicated to the study of Tamiliana

 Rs. 5 yearly

VOL. III NOS. 3-4 OCTOBER, 1954

TAMIL CULTURE

A Quarterly Review dedicated to the study of Tamiliana

Tamil Manuscripts in European Libraries

XAVIER S. THANI NAYAGAM

FROM time to time various scholars have suggested a complete cataloguing of the Tamil manuscripts and printed Tamil books available both in India and Ceylon as well as in foreign countries, but hitherto only some preparatory work necessary for the documentation of such literature has been done here and abroad.[1] The present writer undertook a tour of some of the more important libraries of Europe for purposes of a preliminary survey of Tamil material available in them, and for the short time he was able to devote to this work he has been more than amply rewarded. He, therefore, sets down briefly his finds in the hope that this account not only will stimulate further research by individual Tamil scholars visiting Europe, but also will lead to organised study sponsored by Universities with departments of Tamil and by literary and cultural associations dedicated to the furtherance of Tamil studies.[2]

PORTUGAL

(1) The Biblioteca nacional da Lisboa had a Manuscript (M. 3141) which was catalogued under the same title as the manuscript itself "*Arte da lingua malabar*". It con-

---

1 E.g. L. D. BARNETT and G. U. POPE, *A Catalogue of the Tamil books in the library of the British museum*, VII, 590 pp., London, 1909; *Catalogue sommaire des manuscrites indiens de la bibliothèque nationale*, Paris 1912.

2 The Universities of Annamalai, Madras, Travancore and Ceylon have Departments of Tamil. The Academy of Tamil Culture, Madras, and the Tamil Cultural Society, Colombo, are associations founded for such academic purposes.

tained 160 pages of Tamil grammar written in the Portuguese language. It has been composed after the manner of a Latin grammar and the contents showed the division of Tamil nouns into five declensions and of verbs into nine conjugations. Examples are often written in Tamil but more often transliterated in Roman characters. The grammatical rules are all given in Portuguese and often interesting comparisons are made with Portuguese and Latin grammars. For a better understanding of Tamil grammar, the student of Tamil is urged (page 7) to compare it with any Latin grammar, and he who is ignorant of Latin to compare it with the Portuguese grammar written by Joam de Barros.[3] In the examples given, the place Punnacayil is mentioned more than once *e.g.*, Eu estou pera ir cedo a punicale (Portuguese) Nan punicaligu curuku poga irugiren (Tamil).

Both from internal and external evidence, it is clear that this is a manuscript copy of the first Tamil grammar known to be compiled by a European, and is the work of the Jesuit missionary, Henrique Henriquez (1520-1600) who writing to St. Ignatius on the sixth of November 1550 from Punnacayil, South India, mentions his having completed two books :—

(*a*) Arte da grammatica da lingua malabar.

(*b*) Vocabulario da mesma lingua.[4]

(2) In the same biblioteca nacionall da Lisboa was a copy (Res. 248) of the Tamil translation of the one hundred and fifty psalms printed in Tranquebar in 1747. The title page reads "*தாவீதென்கிறவர் எழுதின ஞானசங்கீதங்களுடைய பொஸ்தகம், இரண்டாம் பதித்தல்....இது தரங்கன்பாடியிலே அச்சடிக்கப்பட்டது.*"

---

[3] JOAM DE BARROS, *Grammatica da lingua portugueza*, Lisbon, 1540.

[4] See J. WICKI, *Monumenta missionum, Documenta indica* relative to the sixteenth century; S. G. PERERA, *The Jesuits in Ceylon*, pp. 156-157, Madura, 1941.

(3) In the same library (Biblioteca nacional) was a book in Malayalam printed in Rome in the year 1772 (Res. 499). Its title page was in Latin and read "*Compendiosa legis explanatio omnibus Christianis scitu necessaria malabarico idiomate*". That the copy came from India is evident from a note made in ink "Ex libris Archiepiscopi Granganorensis, Donum Congregationi missionis Lisboni".

(4) The Museu etnologico di Belem, which as its name shows is only a museum of ethnology, has in its iron safe a copy of the earliest printed work in Tamil. This is a brochure of thirty-eight pages and contains "briefly all that a Christian should know for his salvation". It was printed by order of King Joam III of Portugal in the year 1554 in Lisbon. The Tamil portion is printed in Roman characters with an interlinear word to word Portuguese translation. It is a magnificent specimen of sixteenth century printing, and as such has a prominent place in the history of printing in Portugal.[5] A manuscript copy of this same brochure is said to exist in the municipal library of Oporto.[6]

This brochure is, according to the Prologue, the work of three Tamil-speaking Indians, Vincente de Nazareth, Jorge Carvalho and Thome da Cruz. The prologue also says that Fra Joam de Villa Conde (the Franciscan friar who laboured in Ceylon in the first half of the sixteenth century) supervised the work. The history of this particular copy should make fascinating reading.[7]

(5) Arquivo historico do ultramar has two manuscript copies of the explanation of the Gospels in Tamil, சுவிசேஷ விரித்துரை written by J. Gonsalvez, Oratorian missionary in Ceylon.

---

[7] See Diccionario bibliografico portuguez, Vol. II, p. 216; Vol. VII, pp. 433, 434; A. J. ANSELMO, *Bibliografia das obras impresas em Portugal no sécolo XVI*, Lisbon, 1926.

[5] AMERICO CORTEZ PINTO, *La famosa arte da imprimissao*, Lisbon 1948, Plates XVII—XX—at p. 358.

[6] SOUSA VITERBO, *Diario de noticias*, 16/3/1909.

FRANCE

Paris and London are the two foreign cities which contain the largest number of Tamil literary manuscripts and rare printed books. The *catalogue sommaire des manuscrites indiens de la bibliothèque nationale,* (Paris, 1912) is now out of print. The reference copy in the Bibliothèque nationale contained a great number of corrections and more accurate entries which had been made subsequently by better-informed curators. There is, however, need for a complete revision of the catalogue, and for identifying the numerous palm-leaf manuscripts that have not yet been studied.

(1) The catalogue contained the titles of several palm-leaf manuscripts of the *Tolkappiyam,* the *Tirukkural,* the minor didactic works, the *Kambaramayanam,* as well as titles like :—

(a) "சறளிப் புத்தகம்",

(b) "அகஸ்தியர் வயித்தியம்",

(c) "புதுச்சேரியம்மன் பேரில் விருத்தம்",

(d) "வேங்கை உலா",

(e) "மாணிக்கவாசகர் பிள்ளைத் தமிழ்",

(f) "சதிநூல்",

(g) "தேவமாதா பிள்ளைத் தமிழ்",

(h) "அருளப்பர் நாடகம்",

(i) "இஸ்தாக்கியார் வாசகப்பா",

(j) "மயிலை கபாலீஸ்வரன் அந்தாதி",

(k) "சிறீரங்க புராணம்".

(2) The Bibliothèque nationale contains a great number of manuscript dictionaries, published and unpublished, of incalculable value to the study of Tamil lexicography. The dictionaries compiled in Latin and Portuguese by Joseph Constantine Beschi for the literary language and the collo-

quial dialect are to be found in this library, as well as French translations of these dictionaries. Manuscript "Indien No. 225" is a very valuable French-Tamil-Telugu Dictionary.[8]

(3) Manuscripts "Indien 222" and "Indien 223" turned out to be two of the most interesting finds of the tour. They were entitled respectively "*Vocabulario Tamulico Lusitano*" and "*Vocabulario Lusitano Tamulico*". The first manuscript is a Tamil Portuguese dictionary of two hundred and twenty pages of folio size, each page divided into two columns, and has about seventy words per page. The second manuscript, a Portuguese Tamil dictionary, bore evidence of excellent penmanship and consisted of one hundred and twenty-seven pages written in two columns. I was subsequently able to identify these manuscripts as copies of a Tamil-Portuguese. Portuguese-Tamil dictionary that was compiled by Fr. Antam de Proenza and published at Ambalacadu, near Cochin, in the year 1679.

A great number of rare printed books connected with Tamil studies are to be found in the Library of the Ecole des langues orientales vivantes, in Rue de Lille, Paris. The following rare books of this library are among those which seem worthy of notice by scholars.

(1) Carolus Graul, *Bibliotheca Tamulica, sive opera praecipua Tamuliensium, edita translata adnotationibus glossariisque instructa*, Leipzig, 1854-1865, 4 Vols.

(2) *Vocabulary of English Sinhalese and Tamil languages*, 64 pp., Colombo, 1877.

(3) Bunyan's *Pilgrim Progress* in Tamil and English, Madras, 1826.

(4) R. Graul, *Indische Sinnpflanzen und Blumen*, 1865.

---

[8] For the different manuscript copies of Beschi's dictionaries in the Bibliothèque nationale and in other libraries, see L. BESSE, *Father Beschi, His times and his writings*, pp. 222-231, Trichinopoly, 1918.

(5) E. Lamairesse, *Poèsies Populaires de Sud de l'Inde traduction et notices*, 364 pp. Paris, Lacroix, 1867.

(6) N. E. Kindersley, *Specimens of Hindoo literature: consisting of translations from the Tamil language*, pp. XIII, 335, London, 1794.

(7) *Le livre de l'amour de Tirouvalluva, traduit de Tamoul* par G. De Brrigue de Fointaineau, Paris, 1889. This book is a translation of the Kāmattupal, and has a preface written by Julien Vinson. Professor Vinson states that about the year 1761, a complete French translation of the Kural made by a native of Karaikal was deposited in the Royal (now National) Library by a Colonel of the French Army. No trace has been found so far of this manuscript.

VATICAN CITY

The manuscript section of the Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana contains some rare Tamil books which are not found in other libraries of Europe. The manuscripts and books pertaining to India have not been catalogued with any precision, and hence it took time and a great deal of co-operation on the part of the staff to have access to some of the rare books treasured within the walls of the Vatican library.

(1) Borgiano Ind. 12. This proved to be the printed copy of the manuscripts found in the Bibliothèque nationale, Paris, under "Indien 222 and 223". The title page read as follows: *Vocabulario Tamulico com a significaçam Portugueza composto pello P. Antam de Proenza da companhia de Iesu missionario da Missam de Madurey.*

Na imprensa tamulica da Provincia do Malabar, por Ignacio Aichamoni impressor della Ambalacatta em 30 de Iulho, 1679 annos.

The writer identified it as a copy of the famous dictionary printed at Ambalacadu in 1679 at the Tamil Press set up by the Jesuits. The author mentions in his preface a

dictionary compiled by Fr. Ignacio Bruno (1579—1659) in Jaffna. Within the covers of the dictionary is a manuscript of Tamil grammar entitled "*Arte Tamulica*".[9]

(2) Vat. Ind. 24. This turned out to be the far-famed *Flos Sanctorum* by Henrique Henriquez published on the Fishery Coast in the year 1587. Though several authors on the missions have mentioned this work, this particular copy had remained unidentified. It contained a Spanish introduction that was hand-written and the title read "*Libro do las vidas di algunos santos trasladadas en lengua malavar*". It is a magnificent volume of six hundred and sixty pages, and for the first attempts at Tamil printing it is a *masterly achievement. It contains* the lives of the important saints of each month and reflections on the chief feasts and mysteries celebrated during the year. It is the greatest attempt of the sixteenth century to express Christian thoughts through the medium of Tamil.

(3) Borgiano Ind. 7. This is a copy of the New Testament printed in Tamil at Tranquebar in the year 1714. It consists of four hundred and ninety-four pages and is de-

---

[9] *The Tamil Lexicon*, University of Madras, 1936, in Introduction, pp. XXXVI, XXXVII, speaks of Fr. Antam de Proenza's dictionary, as well as of three of Father Beschi's dictionaries as being unavailable. The *Kodumtamil* — *Latin* dictionary is available with a number of persons. The present writer saw in 1945 at least forty copies of the work at Bishop's House, Trichinopoly. A copy with the present writer is entitled *Vulgaris Tamulicae linguae dictionarium tamulico — latinum, auctore P. Constantio Josepho Beschio S.J., Trichinopoly, excudebat Pakkiam Pillay, filius Veda Nayagam Pillay, Typis South India Times, dictis, 1882.*

D. FERROLI, *The Jesuits in Malabar*, Bangalore City, 1939, in a note on the first printing presses in India, ibid. p. 470 quotes Bishop Medlycott as writing in the last century (the date of the note is not given): "In 1679 Fr. Anthony de Provensa printed at St. Paul's College, Ambalacad, the first Portuguese-Tamil dictionary, possessing this peculiarity that the Tamil section was engraved on wooden blocks, while the Portuguese was printed in movable type. The appearance is smudgy. I saw a copy with my late secretary, Bishop Menacheri, at Trichur".

dicated to Frederick IV of Denmark. The dedication is signed by Bartholomaeus Zigenbalg and Iohannes Ernestus Gründler.

(4) Borg. P. F. Ind. 6. is an interesting poem entitled பள்ளிப் புள்ளையார் இந்து. It is written in ink on thick white paper and probably belongs to the sixteenth or seventeenth century.

(5) Borg. 29 and 30 are brochures printed at Tranquebar. Borg. 30 is a பஞ்சாங்கம் of sixteen pages for the year 1792, and was probably printed in 1791. Borg. 29 is a brochure of seventy two pages printed in the year 1772, and deals with the problem of the salvation of the gentiles.

(6) Vat. Ind. 18 is a palm-leaf manuscript of the lives of the Twelve apostles in verse, and is a hitherto unknown composition.

(7) The Library of the Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith had at one time several Tamil manuscripts and printed books which were sent later to the Vatican Library. At present a copy of an English translation of the Nannool is one of the more rare books — "*English translations of the Nannool. Designed for use of University students by a Tamil graduate of the Madras University" 47 pp.* 224 pp., Hobart Press, Madras, 1878.

NOTANDA

1. These are some of the important manuscripts and rare books seen on this preliminary survey. So many were the Tamil manuscripts and books sent to Europe during the last four centuries that to-day they should be found not only in the important libraries of European Capitals but also in provincial towns like Evora and Oporto, and with private collectors and families which have had civil, military and religious persons working in India, Ceylon and Malaya. Palm-leaf manuscripts turn up for sale occasionally and the European book-market has sprung the greatest surprises for collectors of Tamil documents.

2. Tamil manuscripts and rare books are to be expected mostly in countries which have had political and religious connections with South India and Ceylon, such as Portugal, France, Italy, England, Holland, Denmark, and Germany. But so unpredictable are the ways manuscripts travel that one should not be surprised if a manuscript of Tamil interest turned up at Oslo or Athens.

3. The civil and ecclesiastical libraries, chiefly of Portugal, Italy and Holland contain documents of great value for the history of the Tamil language and culture during the last four hundred and fifty years. Examples of the earliest Tamil writing on paper exist in documents that reached Portugal in the sixteenth century from such diverse places as Tuticorin, Malacca and the Court of the Sinhalese kings of Kotte.[10] The vast correspondence of the Jesuits, the Franciscans and other religious orders, as well as of the other Europeans engaged in civil and military occupations in the Tamil country yet remains to be studied.

In the first part of this century, it was believed that there remained no sample of Tamil printing of the sixteenth century. But a diligent search and research have brought to light four printed works of the sixteenth century.[11] They are (a) The *Cartilha* of 36 pages printed in Lisbon in the

---

10 See G. SCHURHAMMER, *Ceylon sur zeit des königs Bhuvaneka Bahu und Franz Xavers,* 2 Vols; Leipzig, 1928; and *Die Zeitgenossischen Quellen zur geschichte Portugiesisch — Asiens und seiner nachbarlander* 1538—1552, Leipzig, 1932; M. A. HEDWIG FITZLER, *Os tombos de Ceilaõ da seccao ultramarina da biblioteca nacional,* Lisbon, 1927; PIERIS-FITZLER, *Ceylon and Portugal,* Leipzig, 1927, fails to mention or translate the Tamil sentences in the letters from the Court of the King of Kotte, though reproducing in a frontispiece plate the Tamil writing which precedes the signature of the Sinhalese king.

11 See G. SCHURHAMMER and G. W. COTTRELL, *The first printing in Indic characters* in the *Harvard Library Bulletin,* Vol. VI, No. 2, pp. 147-160, 1952.

year 1554 ; (b) The *Doctrina Christiana* of 16 pages by Henrique Henriquez and Manuel de Sao Pedro printed in Quilon in the year 1578 ; (c) The *Doctrina Christam* of 120 pages by Henrique Henriquez printed at Cochin in the year 1579 ; and (d) The *Flos Sanctorum* of six hundred and sixty pages by Henrique Henriquez printed (probably at Punnaikayil on the Fishery Coast) in the year 1887.

More important and interesting discoveries await the enterprising Tamil scholar that is prepared to work in European libraries.

Mānikkavacakopaniṣad

(The Tiruvacagam — An Upanishad)

G. VANMIKANATHAN

THE FOUR, as Sambandar, Appar, Sundarar and Manikkavacagar are lovingly called in Tamil-land, were the spearhead of a revolutionary movement in matters religious and spiritual in the South. A decadence had set in the religious life of the people. One of the causes, it may safely be presumed, was the entombment of the spiritual treasures — the heritage of the people — within the forbidding walls of Sanskrit. The common man was left with the shells of religion, the empty rituals and ceremonials, and the periodical festivals which had, as now, become commercialised into huge fairs and mere congregation of the people without the spiritual communion which had in earlier times characterised such concourses of people. The apostles of other religions found their opportunity in this very favourable atmosphere and seized the minds of the people with their tenets and beliefs, and had very soon made converts of the kings of the land, after which the conversion of the people was but the enforcement of a royal decree. The people were confused and torn among themselves. These four saints came to them as the leaders of the spiritual renaissance of Tamil-land. They did not come to establish any institutional religion. They came to restate the great truth — the perennial philosophy — and to lead the people towards the Godhead. It is therefore that we find all their outpourings of song are mystical in character.

"A mystical vein of thought had been present[1]", writes Ranade in his Introduction to 'Mysticism in Maharash-

---

1 "Mysticism", declares Ranade in his "A Constructive Survey of Upanishadic Philosophy" (end of Ch. 1) "was the culmination of Upanishadic philosophy, as it is the culmination of all philosophies,

tra"[2], "throughout the development of Indian Philosophy from the age of the Upanishads downwards; but it assumes an extraordinary importance when we come to the second millenium of the Christian Era which sees the birth of the practical spiritual philosophy taught by the Mystics of the various provinces of India." But even three to four centuries before this period, South India saw the birth of a mysticism with a genius of its own.

Discussing the difference between the mysticism of the Upanishads and the mysticism of the Middle Age, to which our saints also may be said to belong, Ranade says, "the mysticism of the Upanishads is different from the mysticism of the Middle Age, in as much as it was merely a tidal wave of the philosophy of the ancient seers while the other was the natural outcome of the heart, full of piety and devotion, the consciousness of sin and misery and final desire to assimilate with the Divine. The Upanishadic mysticism was a naive philosophical mysticism; the mysticism of the Middle Age was a mysticism which hated all philosophical explanations or philosophical imaginings as useless, when contrasted with the practical appropriation of the Real. The Upanishadic mysticism was the mysticism of men who lived in cloisters far away from the bustle of humanity, and who, if they permitted any company at all, permitted only the company of their disciples. The Mysticism of the Middle Age was a mysticism which engrossed itself in the practical upliftment of the human kind, based on the sure foundation of one's own perfect spiritual development. The Upanishadic mysticism did not come forward with the deliberate purpose of mixing with men in order to ameliorate their spiritual condition. The business of the mystic of the Middle Age consisted in mixing with the ordinary run of man-

---

and one who does not understand that the cosmology and the psychology, the metaphysics and the ethics of the Upanishads are merely a propaedeutic (preparatory introduction) to their mystical doctrine can scarcely be said to have understood the spirit of Upanishadic Philosophy."

2 History of Indian Philosophy: Vol: 7. Indian Mysticism — Mysticism in Maharashtra (1933) by R. D. Ranade, Professor of Philosophy, University of Allahabad.

kind, with sinners, with pariahs, with women, with people who cared not for the spiritual life, with people who had even mistaken notions about it, with, in fact, everybody who wanted, be it ever so little, to appropriate the Real. We may say," concludes Ranade, "that as we pass from the Upanishadic mysticism to the mysticism of the Middle Age, we see the spiritual life brought from the hidden cloisters to the market-place."

Substitute 'Tiruvacagam' for 'Middle Age' wherever it occurs and the genius of the Tiruvacagam stands revealed.

Thus arose, as Ranade says, "a Democratic Mysticism which laid stress upon the vernaculars as the medium of mystical teaching, as opposed to the Classical Mysticism of ancient times, which had Sanskrit as its language of communication. It was a democratisation not merely in language, but also in the spirit of teaching and we see how mysticism became the property of all."

These differences should not be allowed, however, to lead us to the conclusion that Manikkavacagar reveals something different from or antagonistic to the teachings of the earliest of the world's Mystics — the Seers of the Upanishads. To quote Ranade again, "the mystics of all ages and countries form an eternal divine society. There are no religious, no communal, no national prejudices among them. Time and place have nothing to do with the eternal and infinite character of their mystical experience....They have the same teachings about the name of God, the fire of devotion, the nature of Self-realisation.[3] It is only due to overweening superciliousness certain people regard the mystics of one country or religion as different from, or superior to, the mystics of other lands or faiths. If all men are equal before God and if men have got the same 'deiform faculty', which enables them to 'see God face to face', then, there is no meaning in saying that there is a difference between the quality of God-realisation of some as apart

See 'The Verities of Tiruvacagam' in *Tamil Culture* (September, 1953).

from the God-realisation of others. It is true that there may be physical, mental, and temperamental differences, but there is no difference in the quality of their mystical or intuitive realisation." The Tiruvacagam, therefore, made available to the people of Tamil-land the same pathway to Godhead even as the Upanishads did. If there is a distinction, it is this, — the Upanishads state the proposition, the Tiruvacagam furnishes the proof.

The very elements of democratisation which are the Tiruvacagam's metier are also the cause of the people's failure to realise its identity with the perennial truths revealed in the Upanishads. "In Manikkavavacagar, the man of golden utterances," writes Ranade, "we see the upsurging of a natural devotion to God, which through a consciousness of his faults, rises by gradation to the apprehension of the Godhead. In his great poem he makes us aware of his past joy and exultation, his consciousness of his faults, his intensive shame and his final recovery and triumph." But the songs of the Tiruvacagam are so familiar to us that they slide off our mind without full comprehension. The cadence of the songs, the unique sweetness of the Tamil language, the use of simple household words to whose pregnant and poignant thought—content the Tamil mind had become insensible through over-familiarity, these characteristics contribute to our unawareness of the great heritage we have in the Tiruvacagam. Its flood of devotional outpourings has submerged the scintillating crystals of spiritual teaching even as a torrent of tears hides the lustrous iris of the eye. Thousands of poems composed by imitators in similar language, if not with similar content, have become popular among the people and have dulled their comprehension of the unique qualities of the Tiruvacagam.

It is the purpose of this essay to bring to relief the Upanishadic mysticism in the Tiruvacagam and to establish its claim to the name and fame of an Upanishad dedicated to the Tamil people.

II

The first four *agavals* in particular are nothing if not Upanishadic in character, and the rest of the work is but a development of these four *agavals.*

The first *agaval,* SIVA PURANAM is constructed even as the Upanishads are constructed. Upanishads begin with a prayer or invocation asking for the blessings of God and the Guru. The Tiruvacagam opens with these lines :[4]

நமச்சிவாய வாஅழ்க நாதன்தாள் வாழ்க
இமைப்பொழுதும் என் நெஞ்சில் நீங்காதான் தாள்வாழ்க
கோகழி யாண்ட குருமணிதன் தாள்வாழ்க
ஆகமம் ஆகிநின் றண்ணிப்பான் தாள்வாழ்க
ஏகன் அநேகன் இறைவ னடிவாழ்க

(*May*) Namasivaya[5] bless (*us*)[6]
(*May*) the Feet of Him who is Vibration[7] bless (*us*) !

(*May*) the Feet of Him, who never relinquishes my heart for even as much as it takes to wink, bless (*us*) !

(*May*) the Feet of the Jewel, my Guru, who in Kokazi enthralled me, bless (*us*) !

(*May*) the Feet of Him who stands (*revealed*) as the Scriptures and draws (*mankind*) unto Him bless (*us*) !

(*May*) the Feet of the Lord who is One and the many bless (*us*) !

---

4 The writer has preferred to translate in his own words the required passages from the Tiruvacagam rather than use Dr. Pope's rendering. Wherever the latter has been used, due acknowledgment is made.

5 Na-ma-si-va-ya i.e., the mystic five letters which stand for and symbolise the Omkara or Brahman.

6 '(May we by) Namasivaya bless(ed) be (i.e., live in bliss) would be nearer the sense. So also the other lines.

7 The Omkara.

"The Feet of the Lord," sings Appar, "are the knowledge gained by learning, the Content of that knowledge, the resonant Vedas of the Brahmins, the sacrifices, the heavens and the earth, the effulgent light, the golden sun, the moon, the beginning and the end."

In one word, the Feet are the All. The Feet are the Omkara, the Brahman.

It was therefore that Manikkavacagar sang :

Hail! grant in Your grace the flower, your feet —
(*which are*) the beginning,
Hail! grant in Your grace the tender shoots—your feet—
(*which are*) the end,
Hail! your golden feet, the origin of all creatures,
Hail! your anklet (*ringed*) feet, flower soft,
the felicity of all creatures.
Hail! your twin feet, the end of all creatures,
....
Hail! the golden blossoms which, that we may blissful
become, enthrall us and bestow (*themselves on us*)
in their grace.

The Feet and all they connote are verily the Om, for the Mandukya Upanishad opens with this Sloka :

"All this is the letter Om. It is explained thus :
All that was, that is, and that will be is the Om.
And also what is beyond all time is verily the Om.
All this is assuredly Brahman."

and the Katha Upanishad tells us (1. 2. 15, 16) :

"That word which all the Vedas declare, which all the austerities proclaim, desiring which (people) live the life of a religious saint, that word to thee I shall tell in brief, that is Om. This syllable verily is the everlasting spirit (Brahman).

The Tiruvacagam fittingly opens with Omkara. Namasivaya, Vibration, the Feet all stand for Om.

III

The five lines which follow continue with a prayer for the Feet of the Lord to prevail over rebirth and the non-devotees, and to assume lordship over the devotees. The next six lines take up the Invocation into a paean of the Lord's Feet.

The Prologue which follows is composed in the ancient tradition, and is dedication, announcement of the subject and humble confession of incompetence.

Dedication

சிவனவனென் சிந்தையுள் நின்ற அதனால்
அவனருளாலே அவன்தாள் வணங்கி

For that the Supreme Bliss stood ever established in my heart,
By His grace His feet worshipping.............

The Mandukya Upanishad (7th śloka) concludes :

"*Neither inward consciousness, nor consciousness of the intermediary state, nor ingathered nothing else as to consciousness, nor (total) consciousness, nor unconsciousness, — what is invisible, unrelated, unperceivable, devoid of all connotations, unthinkable, undefinable, essentially of the nature of self consciousness alone, negation of all relative existence, peaceful, of supreme bliss and unitary — that is the Atman, He is to be realised.*"

The eighth verse avers :

"*That is the self, which is the nature of the syllable Om.*"

Radhakrishnan,[8] explaining the phrase 'that is the self' says, "it is the deepest essence of the soul, the image of God head."

---

[8] 'The Principal Upanishads' by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan (1953)

The Upanishad concludes (12th sloka) :

"The transcendental, unitary state of supreme bliss devoid of all phenomenal existence is the syllableless, fourth (aspect) — thus Om is verily the Atman. By self, he enters the Self, who knows thus."

It is significant that the word in the text for 'supreme bliss' is शिव (*siva*). शिवोऽद्वत एवमोंकार आत्मैव is the full text. *Siva — advaita — evam — Omkara — atma — eva.* The supreme bliss — unitary — thus — Omkara — the Atma — verily.[9] Therefore Manikkavacagar sings, 'For that the Supreme Bliss stood established in my heart'. For, does not the Mundaka Upanishad say (II. 2. 6.) :

"Where the arteries of the body are brought together like the spokes in the centre of the wheel, within it (this self moves about) becoming manifold. Meditate on Om as the Self. May you be successful in crossing over the shore of darkness." (R)[10].

அவனரு ளாலே அவன்தாள் வணங்கி

'**By His grace His Feet worshipping.**'

The Katha Upanishad says (II. 15, 16, 20, 23.) :

"The goal which all Vedas proclaim....it is Om. This syllable is Brahman. The Atman (Brahman) smaller than the smallest and greater than the greatest, dwells in the heart of the creatures. This Atman cannot be attained by the Vedas, nor by intellect, nor even by much hearing the sacred scriptures ; by him it is attained whom It chooses, — this his (own) Atman reveals Its own (real) form."

---

9 This is why நாதன் (*nadan*) has been translated elsewhere as 'He who is Vibration', i.e. the syllableless Om, — the Brahman.

10 (R) — Radhakrishnan.

Meditate now on Manikkavacagar's Upanishadic words :

அவனரு ளாலே அவன்தாள் வணங்கி

'By His grace His Feet worshipping.'

i.e.

"By him It is attained whom It chooses."

Announcement

சிந்தை மகிழச் சிவபுரா ணந்தன்னை
முந்தை வினைமுழுதும் ஓய உரைப்பன்யான்

With rejoicing heart, the Supreme Bliss — the Ancient One, verily It, (*to the end*) that my former karma may cease, I shall utter.

The Prasna Upanishad (v.5) declares :

"Again, he who meditates upon the Supreme Purusha by Om, as constituted of three syllables becomes united with the effulgent Sun. He is freed of all sins, even as the snake is freed from its slough. He is taken up to the world of Brahma by the Sama Hymns. From that mascrocosmic self he beholds the Supreme Purusha residing in the heart.

Anandagiri's illuminating comment on this verse is :

"The knower of the three elements, a-u-m,......obtains liberation and is not forced to return to mundane life. He sees the Supreme Iswara who is beyond the world-soul and that vision qualifies him for liberation."

The same is declared by our Mystic in his verses quoted above.

Humility

நின் பெருஞ்சீர்
பொல்லா வினையேன் புகழுமா றொன்றறியேன்

....................Thy glory great,
I, of malignant karma, know naught to praise.

This is the language of one who has realised Brahman. The Kena Upanishad has these slokas about it (II. 1 to 3) :

> *Disciple (after reflecting further and realising Brahman) : "I think I have understood Brahman."*
>
> *"I do not think that I know it well ; nor do I think that I do not know it. He who among us knows it, knows it and he, too, does not know that that he does not know."*
>
> *Preceptor : "To whomsoever it is not known, to him it is known ; to whomsoever it is known, he does not know. It is not understood by those who understand it ; it is understood by those who do not understand it."*

"I think I have understood Brahman", says the disciple. Manikkavacagar too declares in unequivocal terms :

மெய்யே உன் பொன்னடிகள் கண்டின்று வீடுற்றேன்
Verily, this day, Your golden Feet I saw, and release gained

All this Manikkavaccagar sings for us in verily Sama hymns, in peerless sweet Tamil.

IV

The Tiruvacagam is as much 'Sruti' — a Revelation — as the Vedas, Brahmanas and the Upanishads are. Ranade, in his "Constructive Survey of Upanishadic Philosophy" ventures to think that "the real meaning of Revelation seems to be not any external message delivered to man from without, but a divine afflatus speaking from within, the result of inspiration through god-intoxication. It was for this reason," he points out, "that Plato explained in his *Ion*, the origin of poetical composition through the afflatus of god-intoxication." 'The authors of those great poems,' says Plato, 'do not attain to excellence through the rules of any art, but they utter their beautiful melodies of verse in a state of inspiration, and, as it were, possessed by a spirit not their own. Thus the composers of lyrical poetry create those admired songs of theirs

in a state of divine insanity...... Thus every rhapsodist or poet........is excellent in proportion to the extent of his participation in the divine influence, and the degree in which the Muse itself has descended on him.... And thus it appears to me......that these transcendent poems are not human, as the work of men, but divine, as coming from God.' "It was in this way," concludes Ranade, "that we may say that the Vedic seers composed their hymns, and the Upanishadic philosophers set forth their intellectual arguments." We are now able to understand why Manikkavacagar sings thus:

சிவனவனென் சிந்தையுள் நின்ற அதனால்
..............................சிவபுரா ணந்தன்னை
....................................உரைப்பன் யான்

For that the supreme bliss stood established in my heart, ...the Siva-puranam, verily it, I shall utter.

V

Manikkavacagar condenses all the Upanishadic texts quoted above in one illuminating line, the very first after the invocation, dedication and confession, — all which are in the nature of a preface to this single glorious line.[11]

உய்யஎன் உள்ளத்துள் ஓங்கார மாய்நின்ற
மெய்யா

O Truth, who stood established within my heart as Omkara, that I might have eternal bliss!

Brahman itself is the Omkara, the syllableless Om, the Vibration, and its seat is the heart. The next two lines are unsurpassed for their brevity and, nevertheless, clear declara-

---

[11] The seven lines preceding this one have been passed over as they have been dealt with in 'The Verities of Tiruvacagam' (Tamil Culture, Septemper, 1953).

tion of the greatest mystic Upanishadic truth, which the Upanishads themselves take numerous slokas to reveal.

......................விமலா விடைப்பாகா வேதங்கள்
ஐயா எனவோங்கி ஆழ்ந்தகன்ற நுண்ணியனே

O Spotless One, O Rider astride Om, who—while the Vedas (*try to reach*) hail (*ing*) 'O Lord' — (*you elude them and*) (*as the*) O subtile One, rise to the zenith, penetrate to the nadir, and pervade all sides (*in my heart*).

छन्दसामृषभो (Chandasam rsabho) is the word in the Taittiriya Upanishad (I.4.I). Sankara commenting on this word says, "the syllable 'Om' is preeminent among the Vedic hymns. It is 'of all forms' as the whole universe is its manifestation."

Swami Sharavananda,[12] commenting on this word in an extensive and exhaustive note, observes as follows: "The epithet 'Rsabha', according to the traditional Advaitic interpretation, refers to Om, the symbol and designation of Brahman." Hence விடைப்பாகா (Vidaippaga) is translated here as 'O Rider astride Om'. The Vedas try to reach Him, hailing Him, 'O supreme Lord', but he eludes them. "The Atman cannot be attained by the Vedas......" sings the Prasna Upanishad (II.15 to 23). But the Brahman, as the subtile One, rises, penetrates and pervades, not in the external world but in the heart. Of this we shall speak later on.

VI

The Mundaka Upanishad (II.2. 1, 2,3, 4, 5) exhorts the aspirant in these inspiring words :

"The self-luminous (Brahman) is seated in the cavity of the heart and is known as moving there..... Oh good looking youth, strike at that which should be struck.

---

[12] Editor, translator, and commentator of the Ramakrishna Mutt editions of the Upanishads.

"Taking the bow, that mighty weapon, as prescribed in the Upanishads, fix in it the arrow rendered sharp by constant worship. Oh good looking youth, having drawn it with the mind absorbed in His thought, hit the mark,— the Imperishable Brahman.

"The Pranava (Om) is the bow, the arrow indeed is the atman *and Brahman is said to be its mark. Carefully that mark is to be hit and one has to become absorbed in Him just like the arrow at one with its mark.*

"Lives there within, in manifold ways, where the arteries of the body are brought together like the spokes in the centre of a wheel, within it (this Atman moves about) becoming manifold. Do you meditate upon that Atman as Om. Godspeed to you (in your journey) beyond, across the darkness!"

In the case of Manikkavacagar, the arrow has truly hit its mark—the arrow and the mark have merged, becoming the Omkara dwelling in the heart. Therefore, what is a supplication, a prayer in the Brahdaranyaka Upanishad becomes a reality with Manikkavacagar. This Upanishad chants this world famous prayer :

From the Unreal lead me to the Real,
From Darkness lead me to Light
From Death lead me to Immortality.

Translating the aspiration to a realisation, Manikkavacagar sings in ecstasy thus :

வெய்யாய் தணியாய் இயமான னாம்விமலா
பொய்யா யினவெல்லாம் போயகல வந்தருளி
மெய்ஞ்ஞான மாகி மிளிர்கின்ற மெய்ச்சுடரே
எஞ்ஞானம் இல்லாதேன் இன்பப் பெருமானே
அஞ்ஞானம் தன்னை அகல்விக்கும் நல்லறிவே
ஆக்கம் அளவிறுதி யில்லாய் அனைத்துலகும்
ஆக்குவாய் காப்பாய் அழிப்பாய் அருள்தருவாய்
போக்குவாய் என்னைப் புகுவிப்பாய் நின்தொழும்பின்.

As heat, as coolness, as sacrificer (*respectively*),
O spotless One,
Graciously coming (*as heat*) that all (*which is*) falseness
might dispelled be,
Thou, Flame of the Real, as true knowledge shineth;
Void of aught wisdom (*am*) I, O Lord, that art bliss,
(*As cool grace thou art*) the dispeller of that ignorance,
O Preeminent Wisdom!
O Thou with neither beginning, limit or end!
all the world
Thou createth, sustaineth, destroyeth, grace
bestoweth,
And send forth (*again*). Do Thou (*as sacrificer*) lead me
into Thy fold.[13]

From death (involving rebirth), which all the five functions of the Lord are in essence, he prays to be led into the fold,— into Immortality.

VII

This supreme bliss, the syllableless Om, the means which becomes the end, the arrow and its mark, can neither be expressed by speech nor perceived by the mind.

> *"That from which all speech recoil along with mind being unable to reach It"*

is the Upanishad (Taittiriya II.4.1).

மாற்றம் மனங்கழிய நின்ற மறையோனே

"thou art the Mystic Word transcending word and thought" translates Rev. Pope. It is however not merely the Word; it is Brahman itself.

---

13 *தொழும்பு* (thozumbu) literally means service, servitude. A considaration of the Sivagnana Bodam Sutra "*அவனே தானேயான அந் நெறி ஏகனாகி இறைபணி நிற்க, மலமாயை தன்னொடும் வல்வினை இன்றே.* (If one stands established in the service of the Lord, becoming one with Him by the path or law of Him verily becoming the Self, the passions along with illusion and the powerful karma become nought) will show that servitude to the Lord is indeed immortality.

VIII

"This Atman hidden in all beings, reveals (Itself) not (to all), but is seen (only) by the subtle-seers through their pointed and subtle intellect."

This Atman, the Purusha, the Supreme Goal spoken of thus in the Katha Upanishad (III. 11) is indeed that which is the

கூர்த்தமெய்ஞ் ஞானத்தார் கொண்டுணர்வார் தங்கருத்தின்
நோக்கரிய நோக்கே நுணுக்கரிய நுண்ணுணர்வே

of Manikkavacagar which he hails thus:

O Vision, rare to be viewed, O Vision of the inner vision of those who intuit (*Thee*) with pointed wisdom true, O subtle Intuition, unsurpassedly subtile!

IX

There was, however, never any time when this Omkara, the Atman, the Brahman, the Purusha was not there within the heart. It is there in the Dark Night of the soul as much as It is in the illuminated state. Manikkavacagar therefore sings:

நள்ளிருளில் நட்டம் பயின்றாடும் நாதனே
தில்லையுட் கூத்தனே

O Vibration (*Omkara*) stepping a dance in the Dark Night (*of my soul*)

O Dancer in Tillai!

Tillai here is not a town in the South Arcot District. It is the place in the heart where धी: (dhī) = the intellect ली *lie* (fusion, extinction, a place of rest, the supreme being) = merges, i.e., where the intellect merges.[14]

---

[14] Compare எல் el, i.e., light, the sun's rays, லை, *lie*, i.e., extinction, thus gaining the meaning of boundary. For to man, the first boundary was as far as his eye could see, the horizon.

The Katha Upanishad has this sloka about this :

> *"The wise man should merge speech in mind ; the latter he should merge in the intellect. The intellect he should merge in the great self. That he should merge in Sāntātman, the tranquil self." (III. 13)*

"The soul," explains Radhakrishnan, "must go beyond all images in the mind, all workings of the intellect, and by the process of abstraction, the soul is rapt above itself and flows into God in whom are peace and fullness."

"Purusha answers to the Sāntātman," explains Radhakrishnan. The dancer (koothan) in Tillai is this Sāntātman.

The Upanishad continues (III. 15) :

> *"Having realised that (Atman) which is soundless touchless, formless, imperishable, and also without taste and smell, eternal, without beginning or end, (even) beyond the Mahat, immutable, — one is released from the jaws of Death."*

The complement of death being birth, Manikkavacagar sings :

அல்லற் பிறவி அறுப்பானே
Thou who dost sever the affliction of birth

and concludes.

..ஓவென்று
சொல்லற் கரியானைச் சொல்லித் திருவடிக்கீழ்
சொல்லிய பாட்டின் பொருளுணர்ந்து சொல்லுவார்
செல்வர் சிவபுரத்தி னுள்ளார் சிவனடிக் கீழ்ப்
பல்லோரு மேத்தப் பணிந்து.

..............(therefore) the blessed ones, the indwellers at the Feet of the Supreme Bliss in the heart — the city of bliss —, intuiting the subject of the said song, in obeisance call him the O (m), — Him, the Inexpressible.

சிவபுரம் (civapuram), the city of bliss is the heart. It is the city of which the Chandogya Upanishad says (VIII. 1. 1-3):

> *"Now, here in this city of Brahman is an abode, a small lotus flower; within it is a small space. What is within that should be sought, for that, assuredly, is what one should desire to understand.*
>
> *"If they should say to him, with regard to this city of Brahman and the abode and the small lotus flower and the small space within that, what is there that should be sought for, or that, assuredly, one should desire to understand?*
>
> *"He would say, as far, verily, as this (world) space extends, so far extends the space within the heart. Within it, indeed, are contained both heaven and earth, both fire and water, both sun and moon, lightning and the stars. Whatever there is of Him in this world and whatever is not, all that is contained within it."*

It is therefore that ஓங்கி ஆழ்ந்தகன்ற நுண்ணியனே has been rendered elsewhere as 'the subtile One who rises to the zenith, penetrates to the nadir and pervades all sides in the heart'. His expansiveness, his immanence in the external world having been already stated in the following lines:

விண்ணிறைந்து மண்ணிறைந்து மிக்காய் விளங்கொளியாய்
எண்ணிறந் தெல்லை யிலாதானே

O Thou, who fill'st the heaven, who fill'st the earth, art manifested light,
Transcending thought, Thou boundless One!

—Pope.

X

"It was not long before," writes Ranade in his preface to 'A Constructive Survey of Upanishadic Philosophy', "I could discover that the Upanishads contained not one system of philosophy, but systems of philosophy rising one

over another like Alps over Alps, and culminating in a view of Absolute Reality.........."

"We do not have in the Upanishads," says Radhakrishnan, in his preface to 'The Principal Upanishads' (1953) "a single well-articulated system of thought. We find in them a number of different strands which could however be woven together in a single whole by synthetic interpretation....If we are able to make the seeming abstractions of the Upanishads flame anew with their ancient colour and depth, if we can make them pulsate with their old meaning.. they will not appear to be altogether irrelevent to our needs, intellectual and spiritual."

The Tiruvacagam is woven in this spirit. It makes the seeming abstractions of the Upanishads flame anew with their ancient colour and depth. The abstractions of the Upanishads pulsate anew with their old meaning in the songs of Manikkavacagar. The Tiruvacagam furnishes the proof to the abstract propositions of the Upanishads. The reality of the Science of the Abstraction of the Real is for ever established.

XI

If one seeks for the core of the Upanishads, one would find it to be the Omkara. "That is the quintessence of the essences, the Supreme, the highest.........." The Sivapuranam of the Tiruvacagam is in the beginning, the middle and the end, is all throughout the song of Omkara. It may fittingly be called the Omkara Upanishad.

"There is a core of certainty," says Radhakrishnan, referring to the Upanishads, "which is essentially incommunicable except by a way of life." The Upanishads are the way of life : the Tiruvacagam IS THE LIFE ITSELF, recorded in unfaltering words, in words of surpassing melody in a language that is nectar itself. It is an Upanishad, nay, the quintessence of the essences of the Upanishads, — Tamilland's unique gift to the world.

Therefore sang a poet, comparing the Vedas (and the Upanishads) with the Tiruvacagam, thus :

" ....If you would ask,
'which among these excels ?',
When the Vedas are chanted, we see not
Anyone stand with tears streaming from the eyes,
And with heart melting away fragment by fragment ;
But if here Tiruvacagam is but once sung
Even the stony heart along with the mind dissolves and flows ; and eyes,
Surpassing the well in the sands (of the river bed) which at touch swells with water, fill with streaming tears ;
The hairs of the body prickle, the body trembles,
And the hearers slaves become. No exceptions to this
There are in this world of Humanity."

The writer dedicates this article to Sri V. Subbarayar of Matunga, Bombay, a nectarine ocean of intuitive knowledge of the*Tirumurais,* of the waters of which it was given to this writer to take but a sip—much less indeed.

The Concept of Anava in Saiva Siddhanta

D. I. JESUDOSS, M.A., M. LITT.

INTRODUCTION

THE concept of Anava mala is the fundamental concept in Saiva Siddhanta philosophy and in the Saivite religion of Tamil Nad. Both Dr. S. S. Suryanarayana Sastri and Dr. G. U. Pope refer to it as "The original sin"[1] of Siddhanta. But the term, as the learned doctors point out, should not be understood in the Christian way. The word sin here connotes nothing more than imperfection, impurity, dirt and defilement in the soul. It is the root cause of ignorance and arrogance.

NAMES

The word Anava is a Sanskrit term. It is usually called in Tamil as Sirumai (smallness), thimir (arrogance), Irul (darkness) and Munnaippu (want of poise). The anava, the veil which enshrouds the soul, is also known by the names[2] such as Pasuthva (bondage) Pasunihara(mist round the soul), Mrityu (death), Murchai (swoon), mala (defect), anjana (pigment), avrithi (envelop), Ruj (malady), Glani (depression), Papa (evil), Moola (root), Kshaya (decay), and so forth. Some scholars point out that the word Mala occuring in the first Sutra of Tamil Sivajnanabodha, the basic work of Saiva Siddhanta, is not found in the Sanskrit

D. I. Jesudoss is lecturer in philosophy at the Annamalai University.

1 *Cf.* "The Cultural Heritage of India" (Ramakrishna Mission centenery publication) Vol. 2, p. 42 ; Pope's introduction to Thiruvasagam (trans.) p. XXXIV.

2 *Cf.* "Outline of Indian Philosophy" by P. T. Srinivasa Iyyengar p. 156 ; Kshamaraja's commentary on Sivasutra.

Sivajnanabodha.[3] But the author of Dravida Mapadiyam, the great Tamil commentary, says that this view is not correct; for, according to him, it is implicit in it. In a number of places he opines that it is wrong to see any difference between the two versions. There are other Siddhantins who differ from him.

THE NATURE OF ANAVA

The word Anava is said to come from Anu. Anu means atom.[4] So the term Anava connotes that which makes the soul small and binds it just as pasa is that which fetters the pasu (soul). But Anava is not an attribute of the soul nor is it a product of maya. It is not sheer absence of knowledge but a positive principle of obscuration. Further, it only hides the knowledge but does not destroy it. But it is wrong to refer to it as bhranti — jnana (unreal knowledge), jnanabhava (assumed knowledge), tamoguna (lethargic quality), maya-karma (illusory action) and Sivasakti (Siva's potency).[5]

From the fourth Sutra of Sivajnanabodha we glean that Anava in the solitary stage of the soul (kevala) cause nescience and in the embodied state (sakala) positive distortion. The former quality can be called its idiosyncracy and the latter one as its quality generale. Thus omission and commission are involved in the function of Anava.

The concept of Anava is the siddhantin's effort to solve the problem of evil. It is used to account for most of the evils in human nature. "It is the inherent taint which is attached to the soul from eternity. As a mala, it constitutes the principle of evil, for from it springs Ahankara or egotism, which obscures intelligence and hinders the soul from realising its true destiny namely, inseparable union with the

[3] Cf. Papavimochana — Padala of Raurava Agama.

[4] Soul itself is called Anu (minuteness) because it is made small by Anava; but its true nature is vibhu (pervasiveness).

[5] For reasons vide pp. 130 and 131 of the proceedings of Saivasiddhanta conference 1941 (Dharmapuram Muth publication).

Lord."[6] It is no wonder that Thayumanavar exclaims — "Oh for the day, when I will become non-dual with the Being of True knowledge as I am now non-dual with Anava ! ". In Saivasiddhanta, non-duality or Advaita means Oneness by close association, difference by substance and togatherness by co-working.

ANAVA AND IGNORENCE ARE NOT IDENTICAL

Some scholars, who are usually not Saivasiddhantins themselves, do not see much difference between Anava and Ajnana or Avidya (ignorance). For instance, Dr. C. D. Sharma writes, "Avidya is one in all beings and is beginningless. It is also called Anavamala. It is Avidya because it makes the soul ignorant of its inherent glory and greatness. It is Anava because it makes the soul mistake itself as atomic and finite."[7] Dr. S. S. S. Sastri, an absolute idealist, sees in the arguments for the existence of Anava a striking parallel to the Advaitin's arguments for recognising nescience of a positive nature.[8] To him the concept of Anava Mala, among other things, is one of the links of Saivasiddhanta with monistic idealism. However, he admits that "there is sufficient contrast between Anava and Maya to warrant the non-identification of the two." But he immediately adds "those who would avoid the recognition of Anava have yet to admit ignorance as positive entity obscuring the natural powers of knowledge and action. This ignorance itself is called Anava by the Siddhantin".

At this juncture we can quote the substance of a stanza[9] of Sivaprakasam which makes the position of Siddhanta clear and also conveys the argument for positing the existence of Anava. "To posit the existence of only Maya

---

6 *Cf.* "A logical presentation of Saivasiddhanta philosophy" by J. H. Piet p. 58.

7 *Cf.* "Indian Philosophy" by Dr. C. D. Sharma p. 557.

8 *Cf.* "The philosophy of Saivism" An Article in the "Cultural Heritage of India" Vol. 2, p. 42 Foot note.

9 *Cf.* St. 35 (Translation by K. Subramania Pillai).

and Karma will raise the position of their priority which will lead to an argument in a circle like that of the seed and the tree. Furthermore the question will arise how a bond can affect pure souls. If you say it is natural they may be affected even after salvation. If so what is the good of salvation? Suppose you say in the embodied state, the reals which attach to the soul do not show it its own true nature but only external world, then, when the soul is disembodied, it must go back to a state of self-knowledge, which, in fact, it does not. What is the cause of it? If you say it is ignorance, we say the cause of such ignorance is the original bond of ignorance or Anavam". This explanation seems to go deeper. While many of the systems of Indian Philosophy trace the cause for suffering up to Avidya (ignorance) only, the Siddhantin's conception of Anava goes deeper than Ajnana and so the Siddhanta can here be called depth philosophy just as Freudian psycho-analysis is called depth psychology in comparison with other schools of psychology.

ANALOGIES

Many an analogy is used to explain the nature and function of Anava. Let us now advert to them. The first and the most familiar comparison of Anava is with bran. The subtle obscuring nature of Anava, its eternality and its covering tendency of the soul is made clear by this illustration.[10] The rice is the soul, the bran is Anava, the chaff or husk is maya and its sprout is Karma. But this paddy-grain illustration is met with in different ways in different works. This point is brought out clearly by T. Isaac Tambyah by the following tabular statement[11]:—

	Anava	*Maya*	*Karma*	*Works or persons*
1.	Chaff	Bran	Sprout	Thiruvilangam
2.	Chaff	Bran	Sprout	Nallaswami (Siddhiyar)
3.	Bran	Chaff	Sprout	Nallaswami (Sivajnanabodham)
4.	Bran	Chaff	Sprout	Sivagra Yogi
5.	Sprout	Bran	Chaff	Siddhiyar
6.	Chaff	Bran	Sprout	Sivaprakasam
7.	Bran	Chaff	Sprout	Tirumanthram

[10] *Cf.* Sivajnana Siddhiyar (Subaksham) St. 176 & 315; Sivaprakasam St. 25.

[11] *Cf.* "Psalms of a Saiva Saint" (Thayumanavar's songs) translation and introduction. p. LXXXI.

Another familiar illustration is the likening of the Anava with verdigris (dross) or green rust.[12] Just as this impurity covers the copper, the Anava fully obscures the knowing faculties of the soul. Anava is also compared with a venomous snake. Thayumanavar says that the souls are held between its jaws and remain stupified. The same idea also occurs in Dotti Pahrodai,[13] one of the Saiva siddhanta Sastras. Umapathi Sivachariar in his Tiruarulpayan,[14] another of the Siddhanta works, compares Anava to a dark bride who is too chaste to appear before her husband, meaning thereby that the soul in the grip of Anava is completely unaware of the bondage which is the result of its hold. The same writer in an earliar place[15] in the work compares the soul under the grip of Anava to an owl which does not see in the sun light.

An old poem compares soul with a piece of cloth, Anava with the dirt in it, God to a washerman and His Grace to water that purifies. It is also usual to compare the soul with the swing-board, the ropes of which with Anava, Maya and Karma, and the floor beneath to God.

SAHAJA MALA

The relationship between Anava and the other two bonds-Maya and Karma—can now be seen. Out of these three bonds Anava alone is called Sahaja Mala (Natural impurity) and the other two as agantuka for they function only after Anava. Anava Mala is just like a wicked servant, within the household, who gives hints to the robbers to come and loot at the appropriate time. Maya and Karma affect the soul from without like the robbers from outside the household. The point to be noted here is Anava functions first and then only the other two just as the servant preceeds the robbers. More over Anava hides its own identity as the accomplice of the looters.

---

12 *Cf.* Sivajnana Siddhiyar (Subaksham) St. 314; Sivaprakasam St. 20; "Psalms of a Saiva Saint" p. LXXIX.

13 *Cf.* line 16

14 *Cf.* St. 25

15 *Cf.* St. 19

MOOLA MALA

Anava is also called Moola Mala even though the three Malas are in beginningless union with the soul. This means that Anava functions without any interruption and the other two do not function during cosmic rest. Further, Maya and Karma are tools of Siva while Anava is not. However, Anava is subordinate to Him.

THE THREE BONDS COMPARED

Anava is a positive evil. But Karma and Maya are agencies for good. The latter two are called Malas in the sense that they prevent God-Realisation being accomplished rapidly and easily. Just as we remove the green rust on the copper vessels using a piece of cloth so also God removes the Anava in the soul by giving the soul, body made out of Maya. The Anava Mala can also be compared to rust in a razor blade. The Soul is the blade. The rusty and blunt edge is Anava. The grinding stone is the body made out of Maya. God helps the soul to get rid of the rust of Anava.[16]

Karma is another instrument by which God brings the soul to the sense of realisation. "It is the polish by which He remvoes ignorance, the agency by which He neutralises the force of the Anava Mala. This agency works through transmigration or rebirth".[17]

Maya in comparison with Anava is light or illuminating principle. Without it the soul should be in the encircling gloom of Anava Mala. So, within the Malas, Anava is like a malady and Maya its remedy. When the former is removed the latter also is unnecessary.[18] It is usual to say that there is a competition going on between Anava, the principle of darkness, and Maya, the principle of illumination. The two can be very roughly compared with the

---

[16] *Cf.* "A logical presentation of Saivasiddhanta's philosophy" by J. H. Piet p. 71.

[17] *Ibid* p. 71.

[18] *Vide.* proceedings of Saivasiddhanta conference 1941 p. 319.

Prince of Darkness and the Prince of light, Ahuramazda and Ahriman. However, it should not be forgotton that both Anava and Maya are impurities. The Mala of Maya is used to remove the Mala of Anava just as the cow-dung, which is a refuse, is used to remove the dirt in the court-yard, or the fuller's earth is used to remove dirt from clothes.[19] Further, it can be said, just as one thorn is used sometimes to remove another thorn, Maya Mala is useful to remove Anava Mala.

How the three Malas are connected can now be seen. Anava makes the pervasive soul cognise itself as finite and atomic. "Because of this limitation of cognitive and conative powers, souls act in certain ways which they take to be good or evil; and these acts bear consequences which have to be worked out by being experienced. The consequences constitute the next bond called Karma. But in order to experience the consequences and gain knowledge thereby, there should be worlds, objects and enjoyments, and instruments of cognition and enjoyment. These are provided by Maya (the impure variety). The functions of Anava and Maya are thus opposed; while Anava obscures, Maya illumines; while Anava binds, Maya liberates; but the illumination and liberation due to Maya are very limited; such knowledge as results therefrom is delusive."

J. M. Nallaswamy Pillai describes the three shackles thus: "Anava Pasa binds or limits omniscience or perfect knowledge of the soul and hence called Prathi-Bhantham. Karma Pasa like an unceasing flood follows the soul and drives it to eat the fruits of Karma (Bhoga) without permiting it to seek moksha and hence called Anubandham. Maya Pasa limits the omnipresence (Vyapaka) of the soul and confines it to a particular body and hence called Sambandham".[20]

---

[19] *Cf.* Sivajnana Siddhiyar (Subaksham) St. 142.

[20] *Cf.* Sivajnana Bodham with notes by J. M. Nallaswami Pillai, Note on p. 9.

ANAVA AND THE AVASTHAS

The religious experience of the soul is usually divided into three states, technically called Avasthas. The first of the three states is called Kevala. Here the Anava completely clouds the soul's conscience. All the powers of the soul-thinking, feeling and willing—are inactive.[21] Here the soul is like an open eye completely immersed in darkness. What is worse the soul is not able to understand that it is suffering thus. So Anava is referred here as worse than darkness. For the physical darkness at least makes us know that we are in the dark. But the spiritual darkness caused by Anava not only hides knowledge but also hides its own nature of obscuration. It is in this connection Anava is compared with the shy bride. In short the soul is now in complete black-out. Tirumantram says, that this state of the soul's suffering had no beginning. It is from this state the rest of the soul's Pilgrim's Progress is to proceed.

The second state of the soul's experience in its onward journey toward liberation, from the thraldom of Anava to the spiritual freedom of union with Siva, is called Sakala state. This is the embodied state of the soul. Here Anava permeates all bodily and mental organs.[22] The results are passion, sorrow, infatuation, mean desires, conceit and self-satisfaction of the wrong type.[23] Dr. S. S. S. Sastri refers to them as Panchaklesas (afflictions or hindrences).[24] To use the war parlance, the soul in the sakala state is in the brown-out state. It gets knowledge which is usually called Pasajnana. Though this Jnana does not reveal the true na-

---

[21] *Cf*. Sivaprakasam St. 36.

[22] *Ibid.*

[23] Usually 8 qualities are mentioned. They are *விகற்பம், கற்பம், குரோதம், மோகம், கொலை, அஞர், மதம்,* and *நகை*. vide p. 20 of Pati-Pasu-Pasa-togai (Dharmapuram publication.).

[24] They are Avidya (ignorance), Asmita (Egoity), Raga (Desire), Dvesha (Aversion) and Abhinivesa (Identification). These are also called Pumstva Mala (Human impurities) and the soul undergoing these is called pursha.

ture of soul the little knowledge it gives the soul is welcome to the previous state of nescience. This knowledge is possible due to the sense organs which are the evolutes of Maya. Anava now loosens its grip.

The third state of the soul is called Shuddha Avastha or pure state. Now the spiritual preceptor makes his appearance and just like a wind, blows and removes the potency of the clouding Anava. This state of the soul is also known as the Jivan-Mukta state. Here the soul basks in the sweet flood-light of pati-jnana — God-centered and God-revealing knowledge.

ANAVA AND SOULS CLASSIFIED

It is usual to divide the souls into three classes. The vijnanakalas are those who suffer from Anava Mala alone. The Pralayakalas suffer from Anava and Karma. The Sakalas suffer from Anava, Karma and Maya. It is interest ing to note here that all the souls, in whatever stage they are, suffer from Anava, the impurity of impurities. The first category of the souls have their Mala removed by illumination got within, the second by Upadesa or teaching and the last by upadesa and experience. It may be mentioned at this juncture that Anava is one only although the souls are many. "It is able to prevent the many souls from knowing by means of its multiple sakthis or energies".

ANAVA AND GOD

God is not affected by Anava Mala. This point is vividly pointed out by H. W. Schomerus by the analogy of the umbrella, "which hides only us who open the umbrella while not affecting the sun". To use another analogy Anava is the dark cloud that hides the eye and not the sun. It obscures the power of the soul and not of the God.

The existence of God, among other arguments, can be inferred from the angle of Anava. "Anava being non-intelligent is not active of itself. Since for their own good,

souls should be made to act seeking the pleasures of this world as if they were ultimate happiness, and parviscience as if it were omniscience, God functions through His own energy called the energy of concealment (Tirodhana Sakti) and makes Mala (original impurity) active; hence this Sakti too is figuratively spoken as a Mala; and the function of the concealment is the fourth function of God in the interest of the soul".[25] The Siddhantin is never tired of insisting that it is the Grace of God which isolates the soul from Anava Mala and brings the soul into the Adwaita (non-dual) relation with himself.

The argument for the existence of God from the angle of Anava is simply this. In order to rid the Mala the body is necessary. The souls are finite and helpless, and bodies are non-intelligent. So God is required to embody the souls.[26]

Now the process of freeing the soul is a long one. Though Siva may initiate and guide, the soul has also to take initiative. Deeksha or initiation is necessary to counter act the Anava which is not mere absence of knowledge but something positive. Anava is like snake poison which can be removed only by a skillful sorcerer who is capable of identifying himself with a mangoose. So Siva in the garb of human Guru gracefully removes the poison of Anava.[27]

In another analogy Anava is compared to the cataract in the eye and God as Guru is compared to a Surgeon. "The Atman is compared to the eye, which at all times depends on light for vision. In cases of refractive trouble it also stands in need of eye glasses to correct the defect. When there is cataract neither light nor glasses will be sufficient. In addition to this, the help of a competent opthalmic surgeon

---

25 *Cf.* "The cultural heritage of India" Vol. 2, p. 43; The 5 functions are:—Creation, Protection, Sustenance, Obscuration and granting Grace.

26 *Cf.* Sivaprakasam St. 16.

27 *Cf.* Tiru Arul Payan St. 47.

is necessary to remove the cataract. God is likened to the Sun which dispels darkness and gives light to enable the eye to see. Maya corresponds to the glasses which afford temporary relief to defective sight. God's Grace answers to the Surgeon who eradicates the defect".[28]

ANAVA AS THE FULCRUM OF SIDDHANTA

Anava is the fulcrum or pivot round which the whole Saiva Siddhanta philosophy and religious experience revolves. Anava is the nimitha karana or efficient cause of human experience. Maya is the instrumental cause. Karma is the material cause.[29] The five states of consciousness are held to be due to the increasing influence of Anava.[30] The aim of the evolution and involution is to eliminate Anava Mala from the soul.[31] The word Alaya (Temple) itself is sometimes interpreted to mean the place where Anava Mala is cabbed, cribbed and confined. In the Nataraja Image the dwarf, on whom the Lord dances, symbolises Anava Mala. Unmai Vilakkam,[32] one of the Siddhanta Sastras, says that the dance of the Lord scatters the darkness of Maya, burns the thread of Karma, stamps down Mala, showers Grace and lovingly plunges the soul in the ocean of bliss. The wearing of the holy ashes by the Saivite, which is called Bhasma Dharana, reminds the wearer and the looker-on of the existence of Anava Mala; for the ashes are obtained by burning the Mala of Pasu (Cow-dung) in fire. Similarly the Anava Mala, the internal impurity of the soul, should be burnt in the divine wisdom of Pati-jnana. The wearing of the ashes in bands of three (tiripundara) further symbolises Anava, Karma and Maya.

---

28 *Cf.* Saiva Siddhanta by Prof. R. Ramanujachari in the Journal of the Annamalai University Vol. 17, p. 130.

29 *Cf.* University lecture on Saivasiddhanta by M. Balasubramania Mudaliar p. 15.

30 *Cf.* Sivaprakasam St. 51; the 5 states are — swapna, susupti, jagra, turiya and turiyatheeta.

31 *Cf. Ibid* St. 10; Sivajnanabodham Sutra 1 last line.

32 St. 36; for the substantiation of this view vide proceedings of the S.S. Conference (Dharmapuram publication) of 1941 pp. 250 and 251.

There is a traditional belief that every Sutra of Siva jnana bodha is explained by every section of the canonical Saivasiddhanta literature. If this were true, the fourth Sutra of Sivajnana bodha is expounded by this first section of Tevaram hymns sung by Saint Appar. We may agree with this view since Appar attributes his conversion to Jainism to the Anava Mala.[32]

Dr. V. Ponniah in his "Saivasiddhanta theory of knowledge"[33] refers to a theory of interpretation of dreams based on Anava Mala that "if the experient's grip of Anava (root-evil) is thinned off and thereby rendered ineffective, dream-cognition will be true, however remote in time(backwards or forwards) or place the objects of such cognition may be. If on the other hand the grip is strong the cognitions will be untrue. This explains why all dreams of some persons, and some dreams of many turn out true".

The significance of Anava from the side of epistemology is this: Pasu-Jnana is the knowledge of the soul when it is in conjunction with Anava. The judgement that the body is the soul which is a perceptual illusion is due to Anava. In fact all perceptual errors are due to Anava. The quality of Anava should be taken as Asadharana Lakshana[34] for this character is neither found in the sister Malas—Maya and Karma—nor in God and soul. When the potency of Anava is lessened by Kala Tatwa (Animation) Indriya paratyaksha (sense-perception) results. Yoga Katchi (immediate intuitive knowledge) is the result of the practice of Yoga. For Yoga cuts down the power of Anava which is the ultimate hinderance to true knowledge.[35]

---

33 *Cf.* p. 84.

34 *Cf.* "Saivasiddhanta theory of knowledge" by V. Ponniah p. 122.

35 *Cf.* "A logical presentation of the Saivasiddhanta philosophy" by J. H. Piet p. 16.

GETTING RID OF MALA

Birth in human body is the way to get rid of the Malas. It is said that Karma Mala is removed by Ashta Samskaras or 8 sacred acts; Maya is removed by Achamana or ceremonial and purifying sipping of water; and the Anava is removed by Bhasmasnana[36] or smearing holy ashes as a religious bath.

Some of the evolutes of Asuddha Maya are particularly said to stir and loosen the hold of Anava on the soul *e.g.* Kalai (animation).

Sometimes Puja is said to be the way to get rid of the Malas. In the word Puja itself, it is pointed out, the prefix "PU" stands for poorthi (completeness) of all the Karmas and the suffix "ja" stands for Jnana.[37] By jnana not the discursive knowledge but immediate intuitive knowledge is meant.

Charya (observance), Kriya (rite), Yoga (philosophic meditation) and Jnana (knowledge) are the four different steps[38] which lead the devotee to the final liberation. In these steps initiation and help of the Guru is needed. But out of these 4 margas (ways) the Siddhanta, like many other systems of Indian Philosophy, gives importance to Jnanamarga.

In the Jnanamarga to snap the hold of the Anava Mala the following are to be performed :—

1. Utterance of the 5 letter mantra NAMASIVAYA[39] (roughly this means 'Hail to Siva')
2. Observing Sivoham Bhavana (concentrating on the fact that 'I am Siva')
3. Antar Yaga Pooja (An inward concentrated worship)

---

36 *Cf.* "University lectures on Saivasiddhanta" by M. Balasubramania Mudaliar p. 27.

37 Op. cit. p. 16.

38 They are sometimes said to be connected with one another like the bud, flower, raw-fruit and ripe-fruit.

39 Here 'NA' means screening power of God, 'MA' means Anava, 'SI' means Siva, 'VA' means God's Grace and 'YA' means the soul; Sivayanamah is another way (sometimes held to be the proper way) of uttering the mantra *Cf.* Sivaprakasam St. 91.

Here we may refer to what is called Vasana Mala. This means that the Jeevan Muktha, who is in Shuddha Avastha, due to his connection with the physical body is likely to be pulled down to the Sakala Avastha. To counter act this tendency he is enjoined to concentrate on the mystic Mantra NAMASIVAYA, to worship the Siva Lingha, to go to the temples and to keep communion with the Siva Baktas.[40] This reminds one of the biblical saying that one should be careful lest one should fall in the path of spiritual progress. Vasana (Smell) means habitual tendency or pre-disposition. The soul must be ever watchful so that the three malas, even their smell, must be completely removed.

Irru-Vinai-Oppu (or samatva-Buddhi) and Mala-paripaga (or chitta-suddhi) are the two stages again in the process of self-realisation. The former means a poise of mind when the soul is neither attracted by any worldly thing nor repulsed by it. The latter means riddence of the Mala. After this the soul enjoys Sakti Nipata, which means that descent of Grace. Then it attains Mukthi (salvation), and remains in Adwaita relation with Siva.

ANAVA MALA IN MUKTI

There are many Saiva Siddhantins who believe that even in mukti there is the Anava Mala. But it is said to have no power of obscuration.[41] It is here compared to a fried seed. This position is justified because the Siddhantin is a believer in Sat-karya-vada *i.e.* nothing is created anew and nothing is completely blotted out. This is the scientific law of conservation of energy. On the basis of this law Unmai Vilakam,[42] another Saivasiddhanta treatise, says even in mukti there is Mala.[43] It goes a step further and

---

40 *Cf.* The last sutra of Sivajnana bodha.

41 *Cf.* Sivaprakasam St. 88.

42 *Cf.* St. 50.

43 A book entitled 'Sivarajya' (Dharmapuram Publication) points out the positing of Anava in Mukti not only satisfies metaphysical requirements but also solves the problem of dualism between extended substance and non-extended substance. Dr. Bain has been quoted in this connection *Cf.* pp. 31 and 32.

says even the presence of the Mala makes the blissful experience very keen. This point had been made clear by the late lamented Tamil Scholar Pandithamani (the gem among the Pandits) M. Kathiresan Chettiar by an analogy in one of his collected essays. The analogy is this. A piece of ice on the hand in the cold weather is positive nuisance. But the same in the hot weather is a positive bliss. So also Mala in the Bheddha (bound) state of the soul is a positive hindrance but in the Mukta (free) state is positive, some say indirect,[44] help. This view seems to be plausible if one believes that the Tirodhana (obscuring) Sakti of Siva becomes Arul (Grace) Sakti in the liberated state.

Among the modern scholars Mr. M. Balasubramania Mudaliar differs from the view given, just above, and holds there is no Anava in Mukti.[45] But he gives another argument for believing in the eternality of the soul incidentally basing his arguments on the Siddhantin's belief in Anupalabdhi (non-perception) as source of knowledge. Here are his words, "From the absence of Chill, we infer absence of dew. This principle is used to infer the complete disappearance of the Anava Mala in the Mukta soul, though the perennial nature of its existence is not compromised because it is found in all bheddha souls".[46]

One of the schools of Saivism by name Pashana Vada Saivism holds that Anava does not leave the soul even in Mukti and the soul remains there like a stone (Pashana) covered by Anava. So according to this view if the Anava is destroyed the soul is destroyed. Against this view some Siddhantins maintain that "just as the husk is removed without impairing the grain, so Anava is removed without injuring the soul. This removal is necessary, for it is only when Anava leaves the soul that jnana comes; and it is only when jnana comes that Mukti is attained".[47] They

---

[44] *Cf.* 'Indian Philosophy' by C. D. Sharma p. 558.

[45] *Cf.* 'University lectures on Saivasiddhanta' by M. Balasubramania Mudaliar p. 32.

[46] Op. cit p. 4.

[47] *Cf.* Saivasiddhanta (Second edition) by Dr. Violet Paranjoti p. 107.

further maintain, "the most important negative aspect of the Siddhanta Mukti is the absence of Anava. Whereas in the Jeevan Mukta state it was present, though in a powerless state, in Mukti, it is absent along with the body, which also have been left behind".[48]

It may perhaps be proper to point out here that there are certain schools of Saivism which do nôt mention the term Anava Mala itself (*e.g.* Sivadwaita) ; and that there are yet other schools which positively deny the existence of Anava (*e.g.* Pasupata and Aikyavada).

MODERN CRITICS OF ANAVA MALA

Now let us advert to the opinions of modern critics regarding the concept of Anava Mala. Some praise it and some adversely criticise it. To the former group belongs Maraimalai Adigal (Swami Vedachalam). He writes "so far as my knowledge of various religions and various systems of philosophy is concerned, I venture to say that I have not come accross any religion or any system of philosophy in which this root cause of creation, this free existent principle of evil has been recognised and explicitly mentioned as in the system of Saivasiddhanta. Of course, there is a hint of it in the first chapter of the book of Genesis of the old Testament as has been so penetratingly pointed out by Dr. F. C. S. Schiller, but it has unfortunately escaped the notice of almost all commentators on the book".[49]

A scholar by name Subramania Kathiresu in his "Hand book of Saiva religion" points out that many of the modern day evils are due to Anava. He writes, "Pride of position, birth, colour, caste, book-learning and wealth are outstanding examples of Anava. To claim superiority due to caste is clearly a bad case of Anava Malam as it is to

---

48 *Ibid.* p. 108.

49 *Cf.* "The Saivasiddhanta as a philosophy of practical knowledge" by Maraimalai Adigal p. 10 of preface.

claim superiority due to colour. To hate another of a caste considered low is also Anava Mala. It is equally so to hate another because he claims to be of a superior caste".

Dr. Violet Paranjoti in her book "Saivasiddhanta in Meikanda Sastra" raises a number of questions from the absolutist's stand point. For example she asks what is it that connects the soul with the Anava? Is it some other principle? How does soul, a chit (intelligence), and Anava an achit, come together? Why should Anava be called by that name even in Mukti? Is not Anava a serious menace to the absolute nature of Siva? Mr. A. Shivapadasundaram had attempted to reply to some of these points in his book-let "An outline of Sivajnanabodham with a rejoinder to a Christian Critic". Recently Dr. Paranjoti has published a second edition of her work mentioned above without the absolutistic bias. Even in this work she has raised certain difficulties regarding Anava Mala. For instance she asks how can Anava account for the different kinds of sins that man commits?[50] She points out further that "the question arises as to what happens to the three Malas when the redemption is completed. As they are eternal, their continuance even after their usefulness is served is assured. Regarding the form in which they continue to exist in the post-redemption stage, there is no answer in the Siddhanta".[51]

Dr. J.H. Piet in his logical presentation of Saiva Siddhanta philosophy holds that there are seven assumptions in siddhanta philosophy which Siddhanta logic can never prove but which must be accepted by faith alone. Out of the seven" the fourth is the one of the soul and its fundamental taint of spiritual ignorance or Anava which manifests itself in egotism. The fifth is that which says this taint is removed by Karma as the basis of transmigration".[52]

---

50 *Cf.* Saivasiddhanta (Second edition) by Dr. V. Paranjoti p. 147.

51 *Ibid.* p. 97.

52 *Cf.* "A logical presentation of Saivasiddhanta philosophy" by Dr. Piet p. 180.

He further complains that the word Pasa is used in two ways, and that, sometimes, in a confusing manner. It is sometimes used a synonym for Anava, in which case it stands for the source of the soul's ignorance and arrogance. Anava is that which eternally encases the soul until it has realised Siva. The second use of Pasa is as a synonym for the three Malas as a combination of binding principles, namely, the Anava Mala, Karma and Maya".[53] Earlier than Dr. Piet Rev. Fr. A. P. Arokiasamy in his "Doctrine of grace in Saiva Siddhanta"[54] had pointed out that the concept of Anava offers logical difficulty on the basis of certain other doctrines of the Siddhanta and that various attempts, from the days of sage Arulnandhi, had been made to reconcile them.

ANAVA IN PURANIC LORE

It is usual to illustrate the Anava Mala from certain incidents in the last few centuries and from the Puranic lore. Let us now make an advertance to some of them. The story is told that a Brahmin[55] well learned in Agamas, who was the Guru of the father of the author of the Tamil Sivajnana Bodha, was pointed out as personified Anava by Meikanda to his disciples and this made the Sakala Agama Panditha realise his position and become the disciple of Meikanda himself. Again, the puranic story of the persecution of Soora, a demon, is said to convey that Anava Mala is blotted out by Siva and that the demon symbolises the Mala. Yet again Ravana is said to be a symbol of Anava when he tried to lift the Mount Kailas. For this act he was crushed under the hill till he felt regret for his deed. This particular incident is celebrated on one of the ten days of festivals in the Saiva Temples. This incident is also referred in almost every decade of saint Sambandar's Tevaram. The famous incident in the forest called Taruka Vanam is also said to

---

[53] *Ibid.* p. 18.

[54] pp. 15 and 16.

[55] He is none other than Arul Nandi Sivacharya, the author of Sivajnana Siddhiyar.

have taken place due to the Anava of the sages there. They were puffed up and to punish them Siva appeared at their doors in the guise of a beggar. His bewitching manliness captivated the hearts of the women folk of the sages. This enraged the sages who performed the sacrifice out of which came a deer, a tiger, a fireball, a serpent and a demon all of which were set at Lord Siva. He easily got an upper hand over them and danced in glee. The conceit of the sages came thus to nought. The dance here is the famous dance of Nataraja. This incident is celebrated annually at Chidambaram.

CONCLUSION

We may conclude now this paper on Anava Mala by observing that in recent years a spirit of ecumenism is running over the Tamil Nad which is symbolised by a number of religious movements such as Tiruppavai-Tiruvembavai conferences. In keeping with this spirit a recent publication of a Saiva Mutt observes, "we forget those features of Hindu religion and emphasize those differences which after all constitute the shadow. If for instance the Vedantin recognises in his Avidya the Anava Mala of the Saiva Siddhantin and if the Saiva Siddhantin recognizes in his Anava Mala the Ahankara of the Vaishnavite, would not this recognition of unity amidst seeming diversity create real concord and fellowship and promote the cause of the true faith in this land"? [56]

Paranar

C. JESUDASAN M. A.

WITH Paranar we come to one of the poets most closely associated with Kabilar's name. Just as the names of Keats and Shelley, or Tennyson and Browning are linked together by posterity for certain reasons, so also the names of Kabilar and Paranar are mentioned in one breath by Tamil scholars.[1] That they were contemporaries is proved by the fact that both poets have left on record verses addressed to Pēhan on the same subject, beseeching him to go back to the wife whom he had forsaken.[2] The commentary on Vīrasōliyam informs us that Paranar entered into a controversy with Kabilar.[3] All the myths[4] associated with Paranar's name introduce him to us as one of the great trio of Sangam literature, the other two being Kabilar and Nakkīrar. His relationship with Kabilar is thus beyond doubt.

It is unfortunate, however, that we know hardly anything else of Paranar's life. Myth cannot be relied upon, and we have no history of the lives of the Sangam poets. The outline of Kabilar's life, however, can be traced from the evidence of his own poems ; but we are denied, in a study of Paranar, even such a bare outline of his life. The prolific allusions to Tamil kings and chieftains in Paranar's poetry, hint that he had some sort of connection with many of them ; but the exact kind of relationship is unknown. It follows that we can take but little sympathy to a study of Paranar's works, and it is in such cases that we really regret the extreme

---

C. Jesudasan is Lecturer, Dept. of Tamil, University of Travancore.

1 *Tol* : *Ilampūranam* and *Perasiriyam* : Seyyul Iyal verse, 178.

2 *Puranānūru* : 143, 144, 145.

3 *Vīrasōliyam* : Tohaippadalam, 6.

4 *Kadambāvana Pūranam, Halasya Mahatmyam, Paranjodi-Tirūvilayadal Pūranam, Tirūvalavayūdaiyar Tirūvilaiyadal Pūranam.*

conventionalism of Sangam literature. Had there been some subjective poetry, we would have had material for remoulding the personality of the poet.

As is natural for a poet so far removed from our times, Paranar is credited with the authorship of works not his own. Sivaperumān Tiruvandādi is one of them. But there are positive internal evidences to prove that Paranar is not the author of this work. The profuse use of Sanskrit words and derivatives, and the presence of morphemes like 'kinru' (present tense sign) stamp it with a late origin. Thirty-seven sūtras in Pannirupāttiyal, again, are ascribed to Paranar; but they will really not stand to scrutiny, as by reason of the needless repetitions they contain, they are plainly wholly unworthy of Paranar. Besides, we find in them references to Pillai Tamil, which is definitely a type of poetical composition not known so early as the Sangam period. The sixth stanza in Tiruvalluvamālai is also said to be Paranar's; but the whole story of the composition of Tiruvalluvamālai is obviously so spurious that Paranar's share in it might safely be dismissed.

All that we can claim to be Paranar's work, therefore, is what we find in the Sangam anthologies. We have to guess that some of his writings are lost, because that poem of his referred to by Avvai in the often-quoted line "True, Paranar sang of thee this day,"[5] is not now extant. But the available output of Paranar's is only eighty-five poems, running to 1261 lines. Considering the sheer bulk of the poet's writings, Paranar is second only to Kabilar among the Sangam poets.

Paranar is very largely represented in Ahanānūru. Thirty-four of his poems, covering about half of his output, are included in this anthology. What strikes us at a first reading of Paranar's Ahanānūru is the abundance of the allusions. There are but three poems[6] here free from such digressions; truly, in yielding to the temptation of straying from

---

[5] *Puranānūru*, 99.

[6] *Ahanānūru*: 78, 276, 367.

his subject into allusions, we find Paranar outdoing even Nakkīrar, Kallādanār, and Māmūlanār. In some of Paranar's pieces[7] the allusions become almost oppressive, the poems looking top-heavy. Some of his favourite allusions are repeated in as many as five or six places.[8] They are all very well as a record of historical events and perhaps they appealed to the imagination of his contemporaries, being, obviously, popular stories. But they do seem to show the lack of a sense of proportion in the poet, looking as they do like epic similes thrust into lyrics. Detached from their setting, however, some of these elaborate allusions look very beautiful. The story of Ādimandi, bewailing the loss of her husband in the river, is quite touching in one piece[9] .

Like Ādimandi, widowed, who with eyes
Brimming with tears, went mourning o'er her loss,
Through every land, and through every town,
Demanding who had seen her curly-haired,
If Ocean took him, or if the river hid?

The allusion to the battle of Pāli of Nannan is quite beautiful considering the picturesqueness of its description.

That Āy is fallen, staining red the field,
A noisy flock of birds but newly come,
Covers the spacious heavens, so to hide
The heat of the sun's bright rays.[10] ....

That one line "Vambappullin kambalaipperundōdu" is a marvel of condensed expression.

Paranar attempts a variety of themes in Ahanānūru, unlike Kabilar, who confines himself to Kurinji. Fifteen of Paranar's are on Marudam, another fifteen on Kurinji, and four on Pālai. But we are surprised to observe that there is greater monotony in Paranar than in Kabilar. In a way

---

[7] *Ahanānūru* : 142, 152, 181, 208, 376, 396.

[8] The story of Ādimandi and Āttanatti in *Ahanānūru* : 142, 148, 181, 208, 396.

[9] *Ahanānūru* : 236.

[10] *Ahanānūru* : 181.

the repetition of his pet allusions is responsible for it. It is further aggravated by the repetition of pet moods and situations. Taking Marudam for instance, the injured wife upbraids the faithless husband in much the same strain in several pieces.[11]

> They say that yesterday with one fair dame
> You in the river bathed ; it is become
> A scandal, louder than the sounds that ring
> In the battlefield, when victory is won.

In passing, one must observe, that similar as the ideas expressed in these poems are, one of them is redeemed by a flash of unusual dramatic brilliance. This is in Ahanānūru, 6. The hero, after his escapade, comes home, seeking the love of his wife. To placate her, he calls her, 'Mother of my darling son', hoping perhaps that the thoughts of that sacred tie would make her forget and forgive. But she takes it to be a hint that she has lost her youth. She fires up :

> "With such deceitful words seek not to mock
> The advance of age in me ; enough of this !"[12]

But this is an exception.

Very high credit cannot be given to Paranar on the score of characterisation. The lover is little besides a bundle of desires. He dreams of his lady's beauty,[13] he pities himself for loving the unattainable,[14] and curses his heart for bewitching him.[15] That is all he is good for, unless it were also for his escapade with harlots, of which we hear very often. The harlot's picture however, is in keeping with her character. She is aggressive, voluptuous, indelicate and cunning. She boasts of her own powers.

> "I am resolved to drag him by the hand."[16]

---

11 *Ahanānūru*: 6, 116, 226, 246, 266.

12 *Ahanānūru*: 6.

13 *Ahanānūru*: 152, 162, 198, 208, 262.

14 *Ahanānūru*: 322, 372.

15 *Ahanānūru*: 212, 258.

16 *Ahanānūru*: 76.

In the presence of the heroine's attendants she defiantly says:

"In sight of his own household dames,
I'll drag him by his garland and his scarf,
And bind him to my shoulder with my hair."[17]

As for the heroine, she is meek and mild enough as a girl, but when she is the injured wife she is, quite naturally, irritable towards her husband. Her attendant is not given the privileges which early convention has conferred on the lady's maid elsewhere in Sangam literature. Under Paranar's eye she dwindles into insignificance. These are the dramatis personae in Paranar's poetry, and as such they are often colourless.

But there are beautiful poems that Paranar has contributed to Ahanānūru, in spite of these deficiencies. Two at least of these poems remind us pleasantly of Kabilar. One is the description,

"From swaying branches of the dusky boughs
Of the mango in the fields, the new flowers fall
Like the close-falling raindrops."[18]

The other is the simile,

"Love breaks through shyness, like floods not to be stayed
By barriers of salt."[19]

A very beautiful image, familiar to all Indian minds, arrests us with delight in the following passage.

The broad and long-stalked lotus leaf, upborne
Upon the water, keeps waving like the ears
Of the mighty elephant, with every wind
That stirs the azure depths................[20]

---

[17] *Ahanānūru*: 276.

[18] *Ahanānūru*: 236.

[19] *Ahanānūru*: 208.

[20] *Ahanānūru*: 186.

Another poem shows an equally loving observation of the details of Nature.

> To eat the silver fish, the stork, as though
> Afraid its steps were audible, moves soft,
> Like a burglar entering a guarded house.[21]

The comparison of an agitated, trembling girl to a "tender leaf wind-shaken" in Ahanānūru is no image alien to Engilsh readers.

It seems that by the laws of poetry, no poet can exist without similes. Paranar also has his fund of them. One of the very best of his poems is nothing but a bundle of similes, the cumulative effect of which is beautiful in the original.

> The boar, with hair as thick as bamboo roots
> And tusks as hard as diamond,
> Drinks of the spring like the tom-tom's face,
> Descends the rocks like the she-elephants at rest,
> And brushes swaying bunches of the flowers
> New-opening, white as paddy-birds,
> Till golden pollen, shaken down, makes it appear
> Like the touchstone.[22]

Ahanānūru 122 is a lovely little piece, remarkable for its lyrical grace and beauty, and it owes half its charm to the cumulative effect of parallel statements.

> Though it were not a festival, the town,
> Of revellers will hardly go to sleep ;
> Though all the busy streets might chance to rest,
> My sharp-tongued mother still keeps wakeful watch ;
> Though she, too-cautious guardian, choose to doze
> The sleepless sentries run their midnight rounds ;
> And if the sworded sentinels but chance
> To sleep, the watchful dog will wake and bark ;
> If the noisy dog take rest, like broad daylight
> The moon stays in the heavens to spread its rays ;
> And if, one day, all these are hushed, then he,
> Not firm enough at heart, comes not to me !

---

21 *Ahanānūru* : 276.
22 *Ahanānūru* : 178.

And in this poem, as in Ahanānūru 125, we hear a wonderfully soft, rippling music, falling on the ears, 'like petals from blown roses on the grass' as in these lines :

"Arava vāy namali mahilādu madiyin
Pahaluru urala nilavukkānru visumbin
Ahalvāy mandilam ninruviriyummē"

Sometimes his imagery is charged with feeling, as in this description of the evening, when the heroine sits lonely, brooding over thoughts of her lover who has left her :[23]

When the radiant sphere, the sun, forsakes the world,
To seek the mountain with fast-fading rays........
The green-eyed wildcat with the padded paw,
In wait lies for the cock with silk-soft cheeks,
Close-feathered neck and crest like crimson flower,
So to appease the hunger of its mate.
And how sweet to lovers, even this dismal eve,
If but they are together !

These lines, with the others that have just been selected from Ahanānūru as examples of Paranar's best, can very well stand comparison with the most highly prized treasures of Tamil literature.

Paranar's contribution to Kurundohai is very slender, and chiefly by reason of the brevity of the stanzas, does not show him in a very favourable light on the whole. But there is one of them[24] that makes ample amends by a lightning-flash, as it were, of the imagination. The paleness on the heroine's complexion is compared to the moss that covers the surface of still water. When she is happy with her lover, the paleness shrinks away, leaving the natural healthy brown of her complexion. But when she begins pining for him, the paleness creeps back. Like the persistent moss, we find the pallor

---

[23] *Ahanānūru* : 367.

[24] *Kuruṇḍohai* : 399,

"With every touch gives way,
And back with each estrangement spreads."

It might be a conceit, but a very brilliant one, and wholly untranslateable owing to the charm of the sound arrangement in the original.

"Toduvuli toduvuli ningi
Viduvuli viduvulip paratta lānē."

These two lines may safely be ranked as the crest of all Paranar's achievements.

There are three other pieces of his in Kurundohai worthy of notice. One is remarkable for the sheer sweetness of its melody :[25]

"Sēri sēra mella vandu vandu
Aridu vāy vittiniya kūri
Vaihal tōrum nilambeyarn durayumavan
Paidal nōkkam ninaiyāy tōli."

Rarely can any poet rise to such mellifluousness.

There is another piece that defeats Kabilar on his own ground — that of the simile.[26] The heroine expresses the desire of parted lovers thus :

The cripple who has glimpsed the honeycomb,
High on the hill, points at it while he licks
The hollow of his hands held as a cup.

We cannot help noticing Kurundohai 292, on account of the much-quoted tale it has to tell, of

............"Nannan, who did commit
Girl-murder, for this fault :
The bright-browed child, who at her bath,
Seeing the green fruit on the current borne,
Ate it. Nor would he ransom take,
Of elephants in number eightyone,
And gold her weight,"

.............................., and also on account of the unusual force and energy we find in the poem aptly expressing through the allusion the anger of the speaker.

---

[25] *Kurundohai* : 298.
[26] *Kurundohai* : 60.

But when we have noticed the above, we have seen all that is worthy of notice in Paranar's Kurundohai. It might be observed in passing that though in general Paranar's Kurundohai pieces are slightly longer than Kabilar's, they are definitely less powerful.

Paranar's Narrinai poems are more impressive on the whole than his Kurundohai. There are lovely descriptions of nature, worthy of Kabilar. See this : [27]

The black-foot buffaloes that feasted on
The hyacinths, turn satiate away
From the dewy lotus blooms in watered fields,
And warrior-like strut neighbouring mounds

Of white sand, where to doze in peace,

or this : [28]

The sweet fruit, loosened from the mango-tree
Drops with a splash in deep still waters where
The buds of water-lilies look like storks that wait
In silence for the fish.

This is how Paranar sees the cloud that has shed its rain.

The raincloud that has spent its falling drops
Is like pure sifted cotton.[29]

Narrinai, 300 is quite interesting, revealing dramatic powers quite unusual for Paranar. The heroine's hand is desired by a suitor other than the lover. He is clever enough to try to make prompt arrangements for the marriage. Her maid is having a hit at her mistress' lover for not having formally proposed the desired match to the lady's parents.

"He of the well watered land,
Left having stationed at our door the coach
He brought as price of my lady's hand ; and thou
Not ready with such a coach, standest close
Beside the kitchen, touching the thatched roof, like
A mighty elephant that waits for alms."

---

[27] *Narrinai*: 260
[28] *Narrinai*: 280
[29] *Narrinai*: 247.

But the noblest of Paranar's Narrinai poems need to be quoted in full below, although a translation cannot do it full justice. It contains one long simile, the kind that would be recognized as the epic simile, but which is freely allowed in short verses in ancient Tamil. It is the complaint of the lover, who has been refused the hand of his lady by her parents :

The crimson-footed swan, with feathers soft
Distinctly seen, come from the low South Sea
After its feed, takes for its naked young
Petted of goddesses in golden heights
Of the Himalayas, their daily food,
Like those unwearied mighty wings that strained,
You have been sorely troubled, O my heart,
That went to her and is returned repulsed.
But still, someday, might she not at my side
Shine like the morning star in the Eastern sky ? [30]

. . . .

Paranar's Padirruppattu poems are a great achievement. Truly, they are superior to Kabilar's contribution to the 'Ten Tens,' which is saying a great deal. In the colophon to these pieces, we find that they were sung in honour of Cēran Cēnguttuvan, and that, in return for them, the king gave the poet, besides land, his own son as a reward ! What we might think of the king for his extravagance, need not, however, shake our opinion of the poet. Paranar's 'Ten' are among the glories of Tamil literature. They celebrate the great Tamil king's valour and generosity.

It appears this Cēran Cēnguttuvan numbered, among his victories, his victory over a horde that came from overseas to invade his territory. The event is celebrated in several of the Ten. The poems breathe of the sea, and lend exquisite imagery. Here is a description of Cēnguttuvan's horses :

More numerous than the cold and countless waves,
With heads of white foam spraying coloured drops,
From many -billowed, dark, and mighty seas.[31]

---

30 *Narrinai*: 356.

31 *Padirruppattu*: 42.

Here is a wonderful simile, that is not exactly a conceit for one who has really seen the bird in question dive into the water for prey, and emerge with its thin, tapering beak upward. But we can guess it was crude surgery for the warrior who had his wound stitched.

> The long, sharp needle that sinks in the breast,
> As the halcyon, that looking for its prey,
> Swoops in the cold depths, and flies up again.

The following poem is quite remarkable for the beauty of its description.

> In streets where from the terraces, like streams
> That flow down mountains, banners upon the wind
> Tremulously unroll, the stout flames keep
> Brightening in the lamps because the oil
> Overflows from the burner[32]

Paranar's Padirruppattu rises sometimes into deep and complex harmonies, like the piece beginning.

> " Māmalai mulakkin manganam panippa
> Kān mayangu kadalurai āliyodu sidari "[33]

Sometimes the poet is quite lyrical, as in that poem opening thus :

> " Come ye, join us."[34]

He indulges freely in parallelisms :

> " Minstrels he crowns with lotuses of gold ;
> Gold necklaces he gives the dancing girls."[35]
> " The bamboo fades ; the rainclouds fail ;
> The hills are dry ; rages the sun."[36]

Perhaps it is natural that a lover of parallelism should also be a lover of antithesis.

---

32 *Padirruppattu* : 47.
33 *Padirruppattu* : 50.
34 *Padirruppattu* : 49.
35 *Padirruppattu* : 48.
36 *Padirruppattu* : 43.

"Gentleness that yields, courage that will not bend."
Born in thy hills, lost in thy sea"[37]
"The sea
That is not shrunk up by the clouds that drink
And is not swollen by the river-streams."[38]

We are told several interesting facts during the course of these poems. Cēran Cēnguttuvan wore a gold chain wrought from the gold crowns of seven kings. His warriors would fight for glory only with veterans. He was bounteous to his followers and distributed his gifts thus :

"Hold, she-elephants for dancing-girls,
Fierce tuskers for the heroes of the war,
And here, are horses for the bards."[39]

The poems are not completely without faults. Padirruppattu, 44 does not seem quite in good taste, when the poet wishes

"May not the urn that hid great monarchs see
Thy glorious body."

But we can afford to overlook them and be thankful to Paranar for the wealth of his Padirruppattu.

We have only a few poems of Paranar's in Purananuru. The subject is, as in Padirruppattu, that of war, but the poems are no longer addressed to Cenguttuvan. Other kings and chieftains claim the poet's notice. The first of these poems, (Puram 4) is remarkable on account of the deft artistry that serves to relieve the monotony of a catalogue.

Thy sword, bloodsmeared in bringing victory,
Is like the beauty of the blushing sky.
Thy shield, all holes made by the arrows, is
Like a steady target to the shots exposed.
Thy elephant, tusks blunted in the acts
Of bursting barriers, is like grim Death.
And thou art glorious like the crimson sun.
Hence, like the motherless and hungry child
Unceasing, wails the country of thy foe.

---

[37] *Padirruppattu* : 48.
[38] *Padirruppattu* : 45.
[39] *Padirruppattu* : 43.

What is noteworthy here is the delicate modulation of each rhythm, together with the fine parallelism, and the powerful contrast at the end. The poem naturally sings its way to the heart. If it would not be too ungrateful one might here recall how even Kabilar overdid matters when he made a catalogue of the flowers in Kurinjippattu.

Puram 63, again reveals Paranar as a careful and conscious artist. The poetry is even more powerful, and one detects the genuine sob of the elegy.

The countless elephants by arrows shot,
Their battles ended, died upon the field.
The horses, famed for bringing victory
With their heroic riders, there are slain.
The warriors in chariots, there lie
Together dead, their shields upon their eyes
. . . .
With spears that plunged deep in their breasts, the kings
That fought, perished upon the battle-field !
Alas ! what shall become
Of the spacious kingdoms with
New riches everyday,
Where girls with wristlets made
Of water-lily stalks,
Feasted on soaked, flat rice,
And bathed in the cooling streams ! "

Examining the poem in original, we find that the devices employed to heighten the poignant effect are the long vowels rhyming at the end of alternate lines[40] and the subtle metrical arrangement, beginning with pairs of long-drawn out, end-stopped lines, and ending with short run-on lines, as though the poet were gasping for breath.

---

[40] *Lines* 2, 4, 6, 8 end with vē, and line 9 ends with 'ē'

Several of these poems are addressed to Pēhan, of whom we are told an interesting story.

Pēhan, the lord
Of horses proud and savage elephants,
Who, taking pity that the peacock blue
And soft, should shiver in the cold, bestowed
On it his mantle.

This almost makes Cenguttuvan's generosity sane enough !

Puram 144 runs parallel to Kabilar's poem[41] on the same subject, requesting Pēhan to return to his wife. It is a matter of pride for Paranar, to recognize that, of the many poems addressed to Pēhan in the same strain,[42] Paranar's stands next to Kabilar's.

There are two poems[43] addressed to Pēhan as tributes to his generosity. In one of them[44] Paranar tells a wandering minstrel to seek Pēhan out, because he is sure of the latter's bounty.

Poorer than thou were we, before we saw
Pēhan, victorious patron ; and now are we
Thus satisfied. He knows 'tis good to give.
His bounty is not meant to earn his heaven,
But to soothe the poverty of men.

Puram 343 and 352 would afford material for linguists, for in both there occur finite verbs with the ending 'ndu', from which it is suspected that the modern Malayalam present tense ending with 'nnu' is derived.

Puram 341 is an interesting piece in which there is a brilliant simile, comparing the confusion, likely to be caused in a village by a girl's beauty to

"The cold lake muddied by the elephants
At war."

---

41 *Puram*: 145.
42 *Puram*: 143, 144, 145, 146, 147.
43 *Puram*: 141, 142
44 *Puram*: 141.

But of all Paranar's Puram poems, Puram 369 is by far the best. It contains an elaborately worked-out metaphor. The battle is compared to the agriculturist sowing his seeds in the midst of thunder, lightning and rain. The trend of the metaphor may be guessed from the few lines quoted below :

> The black-trunked elephant serves there for cloud ;
> The sword is lightning ; thunder, the battledrum ;
> The fleet-foot horse, the wind, in the broad wet field
> Wherein rain down the arrows from tense strings
> By drawn bows ; there, the chariots are ploughs ;
> Bright spears are seeds ; the crops, the trunks of foes.

It is futile to compare Paranar's Puram poems with Kabilar's, because the former is but meagrely represented in this anthology. But as has been seen, the few that are available are well worth the reading.

There is no doubt that Paranar is a true, perhaps a great poet. But there seems to be no justification for ranking him beside Kabilar. The late Mr. Sivaraja Pillai, in his admirable book 'The Chronology of the Ancient Tamils' actually places Paranar high above Kabilar, a decision which is wholly unwarranted. Kabilar was of the few who need not 'abide our question.' In Paranar, as has been noticed, there are several vulnerable spots. He does not show a very high dramatic sense, he is not consistently musical,[45] his allusions are often provokingly tiresome and his flashes of imagery are certainly not so abundant or always as rich as Kabilar's. Besides, his personality is submerged in the literary conventions of his day, unlike Kabilar's, which is kept above water in Puranānūru. But it would be ungrateful to Paranar to compare him with incomparables, or dissect his weaknesses when they are such that many a great poet may plead guilty of them without losing his place. There are flashes of greatness in Paranar. The flashes are neither few nor far between, and some of them transcend all praise. If he

---

[45] See *Puram* 141, 142, where the persistent use of the hard 'da' shows definite want of taste. So also *Puram* 145.

is not uniformly musical, to him we may ascribe some of the most musical passages in ancient Tamil literature, like that beginning.

" Arambōlavvalai tōlnilai nehilā." If there is not so much wealth of imagery in Paranar as Kabilar, there could be no more magnificient image in all literature than his description of the moss which yields to the touch and spreads back when left alone. Thus, some of the heights of ancient Tamil literature are touched by Paranar. Judging by the bulk of his verse, he is nowhere beside the pinnacle. But there are instances of his leaving the earth and shooting straight for the stars. It was not for nothing that Avvai remembered him with such warm admiration :

'True, Paranan sang of thee this day.'

The Tragedy of Ahalya

(Continued)

BY

MISS E. T. RAJESVARI, M.A., L.T.

KAMBAN gives this story of Ahalya in what is now the ninth Patalam or chapter in Balakantam called Akalikaippatalam consisting in all of eighty six verses. Of these eighty six, the last twenty three or twenty four alone deal with this story. One wonders whether Kamban is justified in giving the title Akalikaippatalam for a chapter where only one fourth of it is concerned with this story. The Tamil Grammarians will justify this title because it is the best of the three stories narrated in this chapter (Tolkappyam 532). In some manuscript copies, however, the last twenty three verses alone, are grouped together as a separate chapter under this title of Akalikaippatalam, whilst the other two stories of the Ganges and Durvasa are numbered as two different chapters. From the way in which Kamban is treating the story of Ramayana, one may be tempted to suggest that the two different stories other than that of Ahalya did not form part of his original work; as these stories do not represent any incidents in the main story of Rama. But in the absence of a detailed study of all the manuscripts, grouped together as various rescensions, in terms of the regions of their currency and in terms of the age of the manuscript, it will be too presumptuous to conclude that any portion is an interpolation. Suffice it for our present purpose to follow those manuscripts which group the last twenty three verses alone as a separate chapter on Ahalya.

B

Visvamitra and the princes enter Mithila and this chapter starts with a description of this land of Sita. The first six verses describe the beauty and the fertility of Mithila reminding us of Kamban's description of the land of Rama.

The gardens of Mithila form a beautiful theatre resounding with the music and dance of Nature (verse 64). The gurgling noise of water rushing through sluices gives us the music of the drum. The fire-like red flowers of Asoka all round the place, are so many lights hung all around the theatre. The flowers with the string-like flow of honey represent the yāl or the lyre. The bees humming thereon are musicians playing on the lyre. The peacocks are the beautiful damsels dancing on this wonderful theatre.

This reminds us of Kamban's description of Kosala and forces us to compare and contrast these two together. In Rama's Kosala the fertile rural area is personified as a King—a unique suggestion of the Tamil poet so full of significance and meaning. This King holds his court or durbar. There is the theatre before him where dance the peacocks keeping time with the drum of the clouds, the water plants holding up the lamps of lotuses, the ripples forming the screen on this stage, whilst the bees sing like minstrels to the enjoyment of the attentive eyes the 'Kuvalai' flowers.

There is so much similarity that one may be tempted to speak of these poems as identical. In the description of Kosala, Kamban's imagination takes, in one great sweep, the whole of the fertile lands as a unity and their importance to the state leading on the development of his idea of the divinity of labour, and his much more important conception of a state and that a cultural state where the subjects form its very life whilst the King becomes its body. In the description of the land of Sita this ulterior significance of a state is wanting, but it is a picture of harmony of Nature or Universe, a harmony of beauty the birth place of Sita the Beautiful Sita the Loving Harmony. It is the feminine soul that is revealed here even as the masculine soul is revealed in the description of Kosala. But there the conception of a King and a state comes in, as the unifying principle, whereas, here, the description of the garden does not suggest anything more than the harmony and beauty which from the phenomenon lead up to the noumenon of a harmony of Love.

The workers in the paddy fields—men and women, as lovers come on the scene, as though in a love story. The women are dying to express their hearts through their eyes to their lovers working on the fields. They go round the fields only to become miserable at seeing the lotuses and lilies uprooted and thrown away by their lovers on the bunds, perhaps because these women feel that these men had not the loving eyes to recognise in these flowers, the hands and eyes of their sweet hearts—a recognition which would have prevented these hard-hearted men, throwing away so unceremoniously and mercilessly these reminders of loving duty. In Rama's land is enacted the selfsame scene of love, but there, without the women pining for an occasion for pouring forth their hearts, the loving men themselves, ever inspired by the love for their beloved, remove none of the weeds; for, there is no other weed in the fields except the flowers which are to them so many signs and symbols of the beauty of their sweet hearts. In Rama's land, the land of the hero, it is men who are inspired by love whereas in Sita's land, the land of the heroine, it is the women who are inspired by ideal love, the men however going about inspite of their love as practical men of the world.

In Mithila, the swan feels its kinship with the womenfolk and follows them whilst walking. The cuckoo — the koel-feeling this affinity begins to sing. In Rama's land the peacock, mistaking the damsels of the grace for their peahen, follow them like their lovers. It is there a pining for their love. Here it is a feeling of community that arises in the mind of the swan and the cuckoo at the sight of their gait and at the hearing of their song.

The women of Mithila bathe and all the fragrant kesari paste on their bodies, washed and dissolved in the waters of their bath, is found coated on the bodies of the birds of this water. Because of this change in the colour of their bodies, they are not owned by their kith and kin, who mistake them for birds of a different kind. This creates a perpetual commotion. Even the flowers close their eyelids

of petals and sleep but—alas! not these poor birds. This is how Kamban describes — if we believe these are from his pen — the numerical strength of the woman-folk in the land of Sita, thus leading to a great commotion — a commotion which is symbolical of the commotion of coming war.

In the land of Rama it is not the fragrant Kesari paste of white and red hues, besmeared on the chest of the beautiful men that comes to the mind of Kamban and it is the paste being washed away, that floods, the fields — an exaggerated way of explaining the numerical strength of men. When Kamban thinks of the innumerable damsels of Rama's land — damsels who gave birth to Rama and the citizens of Ramarajya, he is not satisfied with the ponds alone turning red with the Kesari paste washed away from their bodies; his fertile imagination dreams without any restraint of the whole ocean smelling sweet with the fragrance of the sweet smelling tresses of their hair made sweeter by the flowers adorning them. Ordinary standards will condemn this as an exaggeration but Kamban is so over-powered by his conception of the universal influence which has to blossom as Ramarajya, that he finds no other way of expressing this supernormal ideal except through this supernatural way, in keeping with his supernatural and deified conception of Ramarajya.

The fertile yield of the land of Sita is suggested by a beautiful conceit — a description of the rivers of the country not following (1) with ordinary water, but (2) with the milk of the buffaloes whose milk surges forth and flows whilst, away from their home they rest in the waters thinking of their calves, (3) with the juice flowing from the fruits of mango trees grown tall and big on the banks and overhanging the river fords, (4) with the nectar churned in the pressing machine out of the sugar cane cut to pieces and, (5) with the abundant honey, overflowing from the pierced beehives.

In Rama's land, also, there is a flood of sweet liquids but it is all a flood of honey offering a rich intoxicating feast to the fish of the ocean, in keeping with the author's conception of Rama's universal influence. True to this conception, the buffaloes of Rama's land, by a happy, — almost a divine, coincidence in nature, pour their surging milk welling forth at the sweet thought of their loving calves, into the mouth of the newborn swan just opening its mouth and crying for its mother which has left it in search of food. Perhaps in the land of heroine, ordaining feasts, the sweet mixture of a drink or pancāmrta comes to the mind of Kamban and he offers us a sweet mixture of honey, milk, mango juice, soup of the sugar cane and the icy cool water mixed in right proportions as in preparing a cocktail — a sweet and holy drink which can be relished only by the men of artistic taste and not by the fish or other lower orders of creation, believing only in matsya nyaya. If Sita saves Rama the man, the whole world is saved — that is the way woman saves the world not directly but indirectly through the man or the child through her life giving a sweet feast of divine love.

We are gradually taken to higher and higher spheres of more and more refined pleasures and happiness and bliss. In the land of Sita the sweet music of the drum of the minstrels resound all around the theatres on which the young beauties dance. The young inexperienced calf just straying for the first time beyond its home, at this strange unheard of sound, takes fright and dashes into the stream in such hot haste that the astounded sword fish of the waters, in confusion and fear, jump up high into the bunches of arecanut buds. That is how the beings not human in essence react to the beauty and art of women — a suggestive reminder of things to follow in the Ramayana. In Rama's land also there is music, but there is not this fright, of the bards resounding everywhere with their drum, awaking at dawn the damsels of peacocks sleeping on their jewel bedecked cots — a wonderful call to duty of the day, suggesting a happy harmony of the social life.

Kamban gave us a glimpse of the ever-resounding ponds of nature. In the ponds of human art, the damsels close down their eyes while ducking into the water to the music of their jingling bangles and resounding birds and rise up from the waters like the Goddess of Beauty and Wealth, coming up in olden times from the churned ocean of white milk. The damsels bathe in the ponds ; the bees bathe in the flowers. This commingling of sounds creates no confusion of noises but forms into a wonderful orchestra revealing at the same time a miraculous vision of divine Beauty. It is, indeed, a very beautiful and suggestive description of the land of Sita, the very incarnation of the Goddess of Beauty and Wealth, of divine harmony and love.

In the land of Rama also, the damsels bathe in ponds and there is the whirling ripples of water formed. There also the beauty of the damsels is revealed, the very red lilies of water become the disciples as it were of the coral like lips of the women bathing in their waters. Women's beauty sets there the standard everywhere and the whole world imitates them creating in that way a harmony of uniformity, Nature itself resonating to the tune of the blossoming beauty of women. It is the Ramarajya where Rama and others walk in the footsteps of their mothers. But Sita has to live in a land of hostility which has to be saved through divine love which alone can convert the confusion into a symphony.

C

All this is the description of the exterior of Mithila suggesting that we are entering the city of womanhood. It is on the outskirts of this city that the drama of Ahalya has been enacted. These descriptions hold up before us the reflections of so may illusions and delusions to which unfortunately innocent women fall a prey. Is not Sita herself going to be duped by a golden deer of Rakshasa and then by a false sanyasi of Ravana. But all the glory to Sita that she escapes from the hell-fire of degradation; thanks to the

training, she received in the midst of their wonderful surroundings of Mithila and to her own divine fire of chastity and love so beautifully suggested herein.

Janaka the father of Sita is indeed famous for his realisation of the ultimate spiritual truth a great and saintly king who could live amidst the enchanting powers of Māya or illusion and still escape their dangers. Perhaps all this and more is suggested by this short description. Whether we are correct or not in thus reading here a greater wider and deeper significance in relation to the story of Ramayaṅa, one will be justified in concluding that these descriptions of delusions form a very suggestive introduction to the story of Ahalya that unfortunate victim to the evils of the great Lord of the Heaven Indra. This version of delusion itself forming as it were a contrast to the other version *viz.*, Sita's abduction heightens thereby the beauty and force of the latter and attains an organic unity with the main story whose hero becomes the deus ex machina of this subsidiary plot.

Islamic Poetry in Tamil

M. MOHAMED UWISE, M.A.

THE idea of one world was voiced two thousand years ago by a Tamil Poet who said that every country is his country and every one is his kinsman (*யாதும் ஊரே யாவருங் கேளிர்*). The cosmopolitan nature of the Tamil Language is manifest in its literature. The Tamil language is one of the few, if not the only one, which could lay claim to the religious, ethical and devotional literature of all the leading religions of the world. It has been the literary vehicle of thought of (Saiva and Vaishnava sections of) Hinduism, of Buddhism, Jainism, Christianity and Islam.

By far the least known section is the Muslim contribution to Tamil literature. This section of Tamil literature has been long neglected by students of Tamil. Perhaps, the non-Muslims of the Tamil country are not aware that there are many works in Tamil written by Muslim authors and even the Muslims themselves are ignorant of the existence of so many Tamil literary works of their ancestors. This neglect was mainly due to the fact that most of the Muslim Tamil literary works were not easily available. But I was able to collect together more than two hundred Tamil literary works written by Muslim authors. Accounts of these works are given in my thesis for the degree of Master of Arts submitted to the University of Ceylon in May, 1951.[1]

Muslim Tamil literature can be classified under four main heads :—

1. Literary forms.
2. Prose works.
3. Mystical works.
4. Works of theology and ethics of Islam.

M. Mohamed Uwise is visiting lecturer, Department of Tamil, University of Ceylon.

[1] Muslim contribution to Tamil literature : Published by Tamil Manram, Galhinna, Kandy (Ceylon) (1953).

The literary forms can be further divided into :—

1. Classical literary forms.
2. Popular literary forms.
3. Muslim literary forms.

The epic (காப்பியம்) is the chief literary form in Tamil. Cīrāppuranānam (சீறாப்புராணம்) Irājanāyakam (இராஜநாயகம்) Putukuccām (புதுகுச்சாம்) and Mukiyttīn puranam (முகியித்தீன் புராணம்) are the Tamil epics popular with the Muslims. Many literary works in each of the following minor classical literary forms are found in the Muslim section of Tamil literature namely, Ārruppatai (ஆற்றுப்படை) Antāti (அந்தாதி) Kōvai (கோவை) Kalampakam (கலம்பகம்) Pillaittamil (பிள்ளைத்தமிழ்) and Ammānai (அம்மானை). Very common among the Muslims are the popular literary forms namely, Tiruppukal (திருப்புகழ்) Mālai (மாலை) Ēcal (ஏசல்) Kīrttanai (கீர்த்தனை) Cintu (சிந்து) Kummi (கும்மி) Ānantakkalippu (ஆனந்தக்களிப்பு) Tempānku (தெம்பாங்கு) Kapparpāttu (கப்பற்பாட்டு) etc. The literary standard of these popular literary forms rank somewhat higher than that of Folk poetry.

The Tamil literary forms that are peculiar to the Muslims of the Tamil country are termed Muslim Tamil literary forms. The names by which these literary forms are known are Arabic and Persian except one which is Tamil. This is called Pataippōr (படைப்போர்) or war-ballad. The literary forms known by Arabic and Persian names are Munājāt (முனாஜாட்). Kissā (கிஸ்ஸா) Masālā (மஸலா) and Nāmā (நாமா).

By far the most numerous are Munājāt poems which are sung to invoke blessings. Munājāt is an Arabic verbal noun meaning "Uttering in secrecy". In later usage it began to indicate supplication addressed to Allah and his blessed devotees. Munājāt is also generally used for the extempore prayer offered after the usual liturgical form has been recited. Kissā means a narrative or a story. The Arabic word Masālā

means questions or problems. Namah (நாமே) in Persian stands for a story, a book or a Chronicle.

The prose section of Muslim Tamil literature consists chiefly of books on religion and literary controversies. It also comprises a large number of works dealing with the jurisprudence of Islam. Some of the religious controversies were between different sects of Islam, while others were between Islam and other religions. As in North India, Tamil country did not experience so much of the religious controversies based on religious sects. In North India there are two groups of Muslims known as Sunnis and Shias, arguing out the soundness of their respective ideologies. But the sectarian controversy among the Muslims in the Tamil country was mainly confined to the divergent interpretation of the different orders in Islam.

A significant share of the Muslim contribution to Tamil literature is composed of the literary compositions of Muslim mystics of the Tamil country. The history of Tamil literature shows the prominent place the great Saiva mystics occupy in the revival and the development of the Tamil language and its literature. The same could be said of the Muslim Tamil mystics. Mystics of different religions have sung almost the same type of songs when they reach the height of their mystical experience. But these songs are not without the distinguishing features pertaining to the particular faith to which the particular mystic belongs. The songs of Tayumānavar and Mastān Sāhib have much in common. Two important features that distinguish the songs of Tayumānavar from that of Mastān Sāhib are the latter's Islamic theme and occasional use of words of Arabic origin. Similarly songs of another Muslim Mystic, Pīr Mukammatu Sāhib have much in common with the lyrics of the Tevāram Trio.

Although almost all the Tamil literary works of the Muslims have Islam as their main theme, yet there are also Muslim Tamil literary works which deal exclusively with the theology and ethics of Islam.

It is said that the English poets of the Seventh and Eighth centuries wrote in an English manner and very often in an English mood but what they had to express was of Latin ecclesiastical traditions (see Rose Macaulay : Hogarth Lecture No. 14. Some Religious element in English literature pp. 30-31). Similarly it could be said that the Muslim Tamil poets wrote in a Tamil manner and very often in a Tamil mood but what they had to express was of Arabic ecclesiastical traditions. At times Muslims poets went a step further by writing Tamil poems in Arabic script.

Generally a language is written in the script of another language, only when that particular language has no script of its own. Since Tamil has an indigenous script, this usage may be due to the fact that Muslims hold Arabic as a sacred language. The Arabic script is said to be the universal mark of Muslim dominance or influence wherever Islam spread. Muslim Tamil literature of Peninsular India has a close parallel in the literature of the Muslim Spaniards of the Iberian peninsula. In many of the Muslim Spanish literary works, the words are Spanish and the verse form is French while the script used is Arabic.

The poems of the Muslim Tamil authors betray traces of Hindu influences. This was inevitable as the Muslim Tamil poets lived in a predominantly Hindu society. Many of the Hindu ideas and conceptions have crept into the works of almost all the Muslim Tamil mystics. Some of the Hindu ideas in these poems are very much opposed to the fundamental beliefs of the creed of Islam. There are also instances where Hindu ideas have been twisted to make them Islamic.

The distinguishing feature of Muslim Tamil literature is the presence of a large number of words of Arabic origin. These words cannot be dispensed with as they are very essential to convey the Islamic ideas. The importance and indispensable nature of the Arabic words of Muslim Tamil literature is analogous to the presence of Prakrit,

Pali and Sanskrit words in the Tamil literature of the Jains, Buddhists and Vaishnavites respectively.

The esteem in which the Jaina and Buddhists sections of Tamil literature are held is mainly due to the pioneer efforts of research scholars who devoted their lives in the publication of these works. These scholars thus, made these literary works—some of which are masterpieces—known to the Tamil speaking world. Muslim Tamil literary works also will be popular if they are published with critical editions and made easily available to the Tamil speaking world.

Beschi, the Tamil Scholar and Poet

THOMAS SRINIVASAN

THE MISSIONARY

THE few facts that are known about Beschi's life are easily, available[1] and can be rapidly summarised here. Born in 1680, in Italy, he entered the Society of Jesus in 1698 and joined the Madura Mission in 1710. The mission, which had been founded by another Italian, Robert de Nobili more than a century before, for that reason possessed a certain attraction for Italians. Beschi spent the first years in the south of the peninsula at Kamanayakenpatti and Gurukalpatti. In 1712-13 we hear of his being stationed at Ayyampet in the Trichinopoly District. The next two years saw him again in the south where, on one occasion, he was on the point of being put to death for his religion. After another year, spent partly at Madura and partly in Marava, Beschi was definitely stationed in the north.

He was to spend the rest of his active life at Elakurichi near Tanjore, Conankuppam in South Arcot and Vadugerpet to the north of Trichinopoly. At Elakurichi he secured a considerable grant of land from the Nayanar or Zemindar of Ariyalur. Later on he came in contact with Chanda Sahib who seems to have been completely taken up with the talents of the great missionary. The influence which Beschi wielded over Chanda Sahib saved the neighbouring missionaries from many a vexation in that period of ceaseless civil war. It was very likely that Chanda Sahib showed

---

1 La Mission du Maduré by L. Bertrand, S. J. Vol. IV and Beschi, by L. Besse S. J. The latter has superseded all the earlier biographies. The older notices by Babington, Caldwell, mahon &c., were all based on the unreliable 'life' by Muthusami Pillai.

his admiration in the usual manner of the time by awarding Beschi a pension in the shape of a grant of land. This is apparently the only basis of fact behind the later tradition that he was actually Diwan to the Nawab and kept great state.

In any case, Chanda Sahib's nawabship came to an abrupt end in 1742, and Beschi soon after withdrew to the Fishery Coast, presumably to rest after his thirty years' labour. In 1746 we find him at Ambalacat as Visitor of the Jesuit College there. It was at Ambalacat, according to Besse, that he died in February, 1747.

The few letters of the period that have been utilized by Fr. Besse tell us very little about his literary history. There is just a hint in a letter of 1715, while Beschi was working in Tinnevelly, that he availed himself of the leisure enforced on him by persecution to devote himself to the study of Tamil poetry. This was quite in keeping with the traditions of the Madura Mission. Its founder, de Nobili, could write with equal facility in Telugu, Tamil and Sanskrit. In fact, he may claim to be the pioneer of Tamil prose—a species of literature which was little esteemed in the country. It is true that his prose is rather turgid. But he points with justifiable pride to the purity of his own language compared with the barbarisms of the Tamil spoken by the Portuguese on the coast. With equal justice he could have contrasted his business-like style with the stilted circumlocutions that passed for prose even among his Tamil contemporaries. Fr. de Nobili is also said to have composed verse—of what quality we cannot judge, for nothing of it has come down to us.

But deep scholarship in the languages of the country was the least part of the missionary's equipment in Madura. In his dress his food, his manner of life, in his very outlook, he was expected to turn Indian, or rather Hindu, so far as the square peg of his Christianity could fit into the round hole of the Hindu social system. This

method, which owed its inspiration to the genius of de Nobili, and on which the Madura and Carnatic missions worked, has had severe critics ever since its foundation. But it is difficult to see the point of their criticism. The Christian religion did not enjoy in the interior the political support which helped its spread in the Portuguese territories. On the contrary, de Nobili had to live down the heavy reproach of preaching a religion which was associated in the popular mind with *Mlecchas.* His first task, therefore, was to overcome this reproach and prepare the minds of the people to judge his message on its merits. It was only by this means that he and his successors were able to start a mass movement towards the Church among the higher classes—a movement based on religious grounds alone, which forms a unique chapter in the history of Indian Christianity. Even apart from its tactical value, there is no doubt that de Nobili's method was in direct conformity with the spirit of Catholicism. There has always been a school, or rather a tendency, among Christians to identify the cause of Christ with a definite race, culture, political regime, or particular system of social ordering—an unfortunate tendency which in spite of occasional or temporary advantages, has always ended by doing more harm than good. It is the eternal glory of de Nobili that he took up arms against this tendency and enlisted on the side of Catholicism that social purity and personal asceticism which is so much esteemed in India. It was now Beschi's turn to add to it the glamour of a great literature and the attraction of popular poetry.

THE SCHOLAR

Beschi's writings fall into three broad categories. In some his aim was to facilitate the study of the language, particularly for his fellow-missionaries. To this class belongs his grammar of Kodum-Tamil. The word Kodum-Tamil was originally used to denote the dialects of the 12 countries adjoining the land of Sen-Tamil, *viz.*, the Pandya country. Beschi was the first to use it in the sense of colloquial, as

opposed to literary, Tamil. His aim was to give the missionaries a means by which they could quickly equip themselves for contact with the people, leaving it to the taste and ability of each one to master its literature later on. But the results of the distinction thus made by him have been unfortunate. On the one hand, some at least of his successors have been satisfied with this Kodum-Tamil and thus helped to perpetuate a variety of Tamil-Christian Tamil, as it is called,—decidedly less polished than the language of the schools. On the other hand, it has been responsible for the rather foolish idea of some scholars that there is a wide gulf between literary and colloquial Tamil—as if it were greater than exists between, say, Cockney and the king's English.

At any rate, Beschi's work on Kodum-Tamil and its sequel on Sen-Tamil have formed the starting point of all modern grammatical studies in Tamil. Native grammarians had hopelessly complicated the system of Tamil grammar in an ill-conceived attempt to force it into the altogether uncongenial mould of Panini. Again, most existing grammars were recondite with obsolete exceptions and obscure in the last degree, so that they were generally accompanied by scholiasts, not much more enlightening themselves. The only grammar that was at all in general use was the NANNUL. But even this was very jejune, and confined itself to two out of the five sections of Tamil grammar. The result was that prosody, rhetoric and the allied arts had fallen into neglect.

Beschi, with his mastery of European languages, was the first to reduce the rules of native grammarians to an intelligible and consistent system. His Grammar of Sen-Tamil in Latin is a supreme achievement of conciseness and clarity which has not received its due as a brilliant anticipation of the science of philology. At the same time, Beschi wrote a grammar in the style of the native works, in sutras, called Thonnul (the ancient book). He meant it to be complete and, thus supersede Nannul, because it embraced all the five sections. In some places he has bodily taken

over the sutras of his Jaina predecessor. But while it took the latter 462 verses to do his two sections, Beschi has completed his five sections in 370 verses. It is a sufficient commentary on the obscurantism of all those responsible for the teaching of Tamil in the schools to say that this excellent work was printed only in 1891, and has not been reprinted since then.

Beschi was also the first scientific lexicographer of Tamil. He edited two dictionaries, one Latin-Tamil, the other Portuguese-Tamil, and followed them up with one in Tamil, the Saduragaradi. In the Saduragaradi he was breaking altogether new ground. The old dictionaries in Tamil or *nigandus,* as they were called besides being in verse, followed a peculiar classification of their own. Thus the Pingalandai is divided into ten sections and its more famous successor, the Chudamani is divided into twelve sections, such as names of gods of men and animals, words with many meanings &c.,. Neither of them follows the alphabetical order which to us is the distinctive mark of a dictionary; they can be used only by memorising or by frequent cross-reference. Beschi divides his own work into four sections as his title indicates; the first being on names, the second on things, the third on series,—*e.g.* Angas: 6; countries: 56; &c.,—and the fourth on rhymes, that is, grouping the words according to initial rhymes. In each section the words are arranged alphabetically. This book, which was the first dictionary in Tamil on modern lines, has set the standard for all subsequent lexicographers. Rottler and Percival and Winslow and native lexicographers have, with acknowledgement or without, drawn largely on it.

According to Burnell, it was Beschi who carried out some salutary changes in the Tamil alphabet. The *Virāma* or *Pulli* which had originally been used to distinguish the consonant had fallen into disuse owing to the apathy of palm-leaf writers. Beschi saved much confusion to Tamil readers by restoring it. In writing the peculiarly Tamil long ē and ō after a consonant the old practice had been to mark

the *dirga* above the consonant. This diacritical mark (-) had also fallen into disuse in an age of indolent scribes. In restoring its use he carried out a modification of the symbol also. The symbols had been கெ-கெ (Ke-Kē) ; கொ-கொ (Ko-Kō). He introduced the new symbols கே (Kē), கோ (Kō).

THE PROSE WRITER

The second class of Beschi's works are his prose writings. The shortest of them, probably meant to serve as a primer to learners of Tamil, was a humorous skit called THE STORY OF GURU PARAMARTHA (Sir Noodle). It is in effect a gentle satire on the crass ignorance of his contemporary Hindu *Matādhipathis.* Not only has the book been translated into many European languages, but many of Beschi's expressions and episodes have passed into proverbs among the people. Guru Paramartha has become as celebrated as Pickwick or Don Quixote.

The bulk of Beschi's prose, however, consists of apologetics directed against the Protestants. The Danes had occupied Tranquebar a century before, and set up a printing press and appointed a pastor there. Some of their publications reached Beschi at Elakurichi. The danger of defection among his flock was at one time so great that he placed his church and flock under the special protection of Our Lady, Refuge of Christians, and instituted a feast which is still held there annually. He also resolved to take up his powerful pen against the Protestants.

To this purpose of polemics were devoted the VĒDAVILAKKAM (Explanation of the Faith) the PEDAGAMARUTTAL (Rebuttal of Dissent) and the LUTHERINATTIYALBU (The Character of the Sect of Lutherans). The first is a comprehensive treatise on the Christian religion with special emphasise on those doctrines which the Protestants denied. The second was a reply to a Protestant pamphlet called Pedagam (The Corruptions of Rome).

Beschi, therefore, called his book the counterblast to (the charge of) corruption. This is in some respects the most brilliant of his prose writings. With merciless sarcasm he examines every charge in the Protestant indictment and shows its untenability. He gives copious extracts from their works in order, he says, to show up the lies couched in their crude Western Tamil. Along with other arguments well known to Catholic controversialists Beschi does not hesitate to appeal to the 'idols of the tribe' — the religious experience and even the social prejudices of the country. Thus arguing against the right of private judgment he says: 'The Bible is like the ocean full of rich pearls, but to get at them a man must be an experienced diver, else he will only vainly imperil his life..Is it possible for a washer-woman, for a PANCHAMA woman picking oysters in a paddy field, to explain the CHINTAMANI or discuss the THOLKAPPIYAM ? Is it not proper that the Scriptures, like a tank of drinking water, should be guarded from the pollution of the unclean and the casteless, who shall, instead, be served with a potful by the guardian brahmin ? In this way Beschi tells off seventy-eight 'lies' which he claims to have discovered in the thirteen pages of the Lutheran pamphlet.

In the third work Beschi drops the heavy weapons of his theological armoury and covers his adversaries with ridicule. The Lutherans had sent him a letter couched, he says, in barbaric Tamil ; and Beschi replied with a quotation from the book of the Apocalypse where the fifth angel describes the infernal locust (IX, 7-11). He applies this description to Luther and pitilessly works out the comparison under each detail.

The fourth important prose work of Beschi's is the VEDIAR OLUKKAM which has meant to be a guide book for the Catechists. By the elevation of its style, the unction of its piety, and the exalted ideal it teaches, this book takes rank among the classics of Christian spirituality. The Protestants, who had so little reason to love its author, paid

to his work the unwilling tribute of appropriating it to their own use. It has been printed and used among them to this day with alterations to suit their own taste.

THE POET

The Third Class of Beschi's writings, and the one, by which he is best known, are his poetical works.

In the order of merit the least among them is the KITHERIAMMAL AMMANEI (The Song of St. Quitteri) in 1,100 lines. The Ammanei is a popular metre of the nature of the ballad, with a lilt which makes it easy to learn and pleasant enough to hear recited. Into this form had been thrown many a story from epic and PURANA which to this day is worth a living to several wanderings minstrels. Beschi had only recently introduced the devotion to this Portuguese saint among his people, and now proceeded to enlist on the side of her cultus the powerful engine of popular instruction. At the same time he was supplying one great desideratum of the Catholic religion—popular poetry.

Another piece in verse is the ANNAI-ALUNGAL-ANDĀDHI (The sorrows of Our Lady) which contains a hundred verses in the Andādhi metre, in which the last syllable of every verse is taken up as the first syllable of the next. Religious dramas had always been popular among Tamil Catholics, the first such play having been staged at Candalur, near Trichinopoly, in 1653. Beschi's Andādhi was apparently written on the occasion of some such Passion play as we witness even to-day. Other short pieces are the ADAI-KALAMĀLAI in 120 lines, the KALIPPA, in 100 lines, dedicated to Our Lady, the THEVARAM, in ten stanzas which is sung as a dirge, and ten verses in Sandam, an extremely difficult metre.

The most noteworthy among the shorter pieces is the THIRUKKĀVALŪR-KALAMBAGAM in honour of Our Lady of Refuge at Elakurichi. It was usual among Tamil devo-

tees, Saivites as well as Vaishnavites, to go on pilgrimage to sacred places and sing in honour of their god at each shrine. Beschi was, therefore, following them in dedicating the poem to his favourite shrine at Elakurichi. But the Kalambagam is a difficult form in which the poet uses all the metres at pleasure. In the hundred verses he has given at least one specimen of each of the Tamil metres.

Taste in poetry had become considerably sophisticated by Beschi's time, and poets had come to be judged by the jingle of their alliteration, the acrobatics of their metre, their endless puns on words, and rare conceits. Beschi never quite yielded to this facile temptation but in the Kalambagam he shows himself equal to the cleverest versifier of them all. What imparts the additional quality of greatness to this *tour de force* is the loftiness of his ideas, his majestic cadences, and the purity of his literary manner.

It is unwise to choose where everything is beautiful, but a few specimens will illustrate the thoroughness with which Beschi had imbibed the tradition of the Tamil Alwars and Nayanars—the Bhakti school.

"Why was it not my good fortune to share with the crescent moon the honour of carrying her lotus feet ? I should envy the bee singing her praises as it dives for honey among the flowers in her hair. I would willingly become the grass in her fields if she, the deer that bore the Lion who destroyed our sins, would come down to browse there."

This verse is far too reminiscent of one of Kulasekhara Alwar's moods to be a mere coincidence. Or again :

O Sheperdess of bewitching eyes and honeyed words, thy wiles are wasted, for here has her temple the daughter of Annammāl (St. Anne.) who true to her mother's name has the rare gift of detecting the water in your milk and showing up your deceit. (This refers to the Tamil literary convention that the swan has the ability to separate water from the milk to which it is added.)

But, excellent as Beschi's minor poems are, his reputation as a Tamil poet stands or falls with the THEMBAVANI—The Garland of Sweet Verse. It is an epic in honour of St. Joseph in 36 cantos, which are arranged in three books and contain 3,615 lines, altogether. It is based on the Scripture account of St. Joseph, which is very meagre, and on some works of tradition, both amply enriched by the Poet's fancy.

The poem opens in the usual manner of the Tamil Kāppiams (Skr. Kāvyas) with a pāyiram or exordium followed by two cantos describing the country of Palestine and the city of Jerusalem. A couple of cantos follow on the birth and upbringing of Joseph. The fifth canto deals with the marriage of Joseph and Mary. From the sixth to the ninth canto is a description of the life of married continence they led, and enshrines some idyllic scenes of domestic bliss. The tenth canto describes the Nativity, the eleventh the visit of three kings, and the twelfth the Presentation in the Temple. This concludes the first kanda or book.

The journey to Egypt takes up the ten cantos from the thirteenth to the twenty-second. The next seven cantos deal with the life of the Holy Family in Egypt. The thirtieth is concerned with the return journey from Egypt and the next describes the missing and finding in the Temple of the boy Jesus. Then follow a couple of cantos on the last days of Joseph. Canto XXXV takes us to the limbo of the Patriarchs where Our Lord appears after His resurection. Canto XXXVI is a superb paean of triumph celebrating the ascent of the patriarchs with Christ at their head into heaven. Joseph, the faithful guardian of the Virgin and of the Incarnate God, is crowned as the head of the saints and the King of men. The poem concludes with an account of how Leopold of Austria, Holy Roman Emperor, dedicated his kingdom to St. Joseph in gratitude for his wonderful escape through his intercession from a dangerous conspiracy.

At first sight such jejune material looks unpromising stuff out of which to weave an epic, even when amplified by the loving hand of tradition. But nothing can excel the skill with which Beschi has made his work an epitome of sacred history, Christian theology and apologetics in the face of Hinduism. Thus he has woven into the texture of the poem no less than a hundred and twenty episodes from the Old Testament. In tracing the ancestry of Joseph he takes occasion to tell the history of David. In describing the journey to Egypt he recalls the great scenes of Israelite history like the Exodus and the victory of Josue. The history of John the Baptist is brought in as a corollary to Herod's persecution. After describing the overthrow of the gods of Egypt, the poet makes the deposed deities hold council in hell with their infernal leader. This is an opportunity for him to denounce the obscenities of idol-worship. One result of their deliberations is that the fallen angels make war on Joseph : but they are compelled to retire discomfited.

In Egypt, again, Joseph is portrayed as an apostle — precursor of Christ, pointing out to his neighbours the errors of paganism and the excellence of the unique way. Thus Canto XXVII is concerned with refuting the assumptions of Hindu metaphysics, and shows the thoroughness of Beschi's Indological equipment. On the return journey from Egypt Our Lord decribes as in a prophecy the ascetics that will one day convert the desert into a vestibule of heaven. At Nazareth, again Jesus predicts how the house they live in will one day be transported to Loreto in Italy, and incidentally traces the spread of the Faith in European countries. In an enthusiastic vein the poet now throws aside his reserve and concludes with three beautiful verses on Italy, "she that gave birth to me". Of his own province of Venice he says that she is surrounded by the low sea that brings her tribute from every land. A score of verses in the thirty-fifth canto deal with the Life and Passion of Christ, His Resurrection and Ascension.

The first impression that the poem leaves on the mind is its utter naturalness. It is Indian, and Tamil, from the names to the entire atmosphere and background. The rendering of Latin or Hebrew names by translation was an old habit in the Madura Mission which had much to commend it. So in the poem Joseph the hero becomes Valan, the other Joseph of Egypt being called Ānaran, the Baptist is called Karunaiyan, Issaac becomes Nakulan, and the Egyptian interlocutor of Joseph is called Sivāsivan.

So also in the descriptions, with which the poem abounds, Beschi like every other poet in Tamil, has followed the accepted canons of the language as laid down in the "Poruladikaram" of the Tholkappiam. One of these was to depict all scenes according as they belong to one of five categories of land : Marudham or city, Kurinji or mountain, Mullai or forest, Neidhal or seacoast, and Palai or desert. Hence descriptive passages in the best Tamil works are apt to pall, because they are too conventional and standardised. Beschi had hitched his waggon to the star of the Jivaka Chintamani, a Jaina romance, (one of the five 'epics' that once existed, one of the three that still are left) of more than three thousand verses dealing with the life and marital adventures of Jivakan. This poem had become the standard and the thesaurus of all descriptive Tamil poetry of the erotic or naturalistic variety. Beschi had dived deep into that sea, and his descriptive pieces are bold, picturesque and full, while all the time they conform to the accepted standards. The grave author of the Comparative Grammar accuses him of having falsified the geography of Jerusalem. With due difference to Caldwell, however, we may doubt the poetic proprietory of introducing the fauna and flora of Palestine in a Tamil poem intended for the Tamils. Beschi knew better, and his landscapes while they abound in the asoka, the hamsa, the kokila, the bounding monkey and the lordly elephant, show no traces of the clumsy camel and the arid desert palm.

One or two specimens from the large number of such verses may help to give some idea of his method:

The sowers were scaring away from the fields the hamsa birds that had drunk the milk of the big buffaloes which were spontaneously shedding their milk at the thought of their absent calves. (Canto 12, v 50.)

The peacocks dashed at the open flower of the kritika, taking it to be the outspread hood of the cobra, and retreated in confusion on realising their folly. The bees ran away from the kasa flowers, thinking them to be the necks of hidden peacocks, whereat the *mullai* creeper laughed, showing the teeth of its buds. (Canto 30, vv 53-54.)

A distinctive mark of Tamil verse is its use of initial rhyme. The poet therefore, must have a vast vocabulary at his command to find the words that will rhyme perfectly without spoiling the sense. But here the lexicographer in Beschi came to the rescue of the poet. Thus in Canto 12, v 21 we have:

The mountain was adorned with the flower-bearing *punnais* as an elephant is adorned with its temple pendant. From its top rushed a river, heavy with the weight of precious stones and carrying fertility like the Veda of Christ, whose spray covered the top of the hill as the stars cover the sky.

Here the first foot in each of the four lines is Naga, but it is used in the four different senses of elephant, punnai, (tree) mountain and sky.

According to definition, a Kavya should contain matter that will promote the four-fold purusharthas of Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. The Jaina ascetic Thiruthakkadever, had been taunted with the absence in Jaina works of the third element, the srngararasa of erotics, and amply vindicated himself in the Jivaka Chintamani which abounds in the most sensuous scenes. Beschi has just enough of this

manner to show what he could have done in the line if he had wished. A good example is the incident of Neepakan's temptation in Canto XX, which is said to be modelled on Tasso. But Beschi's priestly calling and the majesty of his theme prevented him from exploiting this rich vein of Tamil poetry.

He took his revenge, however, in the excellence of his moralistic verse. Such poetry has always been highly esteemed, by the Tamils, witness the religious honours paid to Thiruvalluvar, the author of the Kural. The Christian poet was not to be outdistanced in this sphere, and many of his verses are strikingly original:

Selfishness is only cured by asceticism, even as the snake sloughs by sqeezing itself between two stones. (Canto 26, v. 122.)

In adversity, stand steadfast like the mountain. Run after God ceaselessly as a river runs towards the sea. Avoid sin as if it were fire. Rate all earthly good as the foam on flood-water. Seek after salvation as intently as a swimming man strains after the other bank. (Canto 30 v. 8.)

Life is the axle of the cart which is the human body, charged with the precious load of soul and intellect and making for the goal of salvation. Avoid, therefore, the rut of sin and the bog of temptation, for, once broken, this axle cannot be mended or replaced. (Canto 28, v. 158.)

Besides, there are numerous verses brimming over with devotion and couched in the language of Hindu piety.

In such a great master of verse it would be an endless task to look for instances of vast learning. Beschi had studied the Tamil language critically and with enthusiasm. He had dived into the depths of its literature and emerged, as far as that was possible for a foreigner, a Tamil and a poet. The fragments of famous poets constantly come back in his poetry, almost in spite of himself. He has,

again, a way of recalling some verse of a master and tacking a part of it on to his own, thus vindicating the truth of Mirabeau's great saying that originality consists in knowing how to make use of other people's work. A cursory reading is enough to show three such verses bodily taken over from the CHINTAMANI but fitted into a new context. Thus verse 14 of Beschi's Canto 1 is nearly the same as Canto 1, v. 24, of the CHINTAMANI. Again, verse 112 of Canto 4 of the Jaina romance is the prototype of Canto 26, v. 61 of the Thembavani. Lastly, most of the words in Canto 12, v. 11 of Beschi are the same as Canto 11, verse 4 of the Chintamani, except that Beschi has deftly applied to a hill a description in which his Jaina predecessor protrayed court women, Extending the same inquisitiveness to other authors, it is easy to discover that the model for verse 4 in Beschi's exordium is verse 2 in Kamban's exordium to his RAMAYANA. Many of the descriptive sketches in the THEMBAVANI are reminiscent of the same poet, who has been called the Kalidasa of Tamil and the emperor of Tamil poets. This is especially true of the battle-scenes in Book II which recall, by the vigour of their movement and the picturesqueness of their detail, the famous scenes of Kamban's Yuddhakanda. But Beschi had a special predilection for Thiruvalluvar, he of the divine muse, and his Kural. Thus he has incorporated in his own verse more than a score of Thiruvalluvar's incomparable epigrams.

Considering the mass and the quality of Beschi's work his place in Tamil literature is assured, on the heights. Tamil prose has never been written in a simpler or clearer, manner reflecting every shade of abstruse sense and responsive to every change of mood, than when Bechi wielded it. As for the poetry, Caldwell, on the estimate of impartial native critics, assigns him 'the first rank among the Tamil poets of the second class' and proceeds. "The first rank comprises only three or at the most favour works,—the KURAL, THE CHINTAMANI, THE RAMAYANAM and THE NALADIYAR." No well-road critic of Tamil literature will accept this judgement. The Naladiyar has neither the beauty of

form nor the emotional glow of true poetry. Some of the lyrical gems in the Sangam collections, the Aham or Puram, for instance have a far better claim to be considered as genuine poetry, by their simplicity, their directness, and the universality of their themes, — love, war, heroism sport and friendship. The SILAPPADIKĀRAM (The story of the Anklet), which possesses all these merits in an eminent degree besides the architectonic quality of its story, will certainly be considered the finest work of imagination in Tamil. Then, and then only, come the CHINTAMANI and Kamban's Ramayana, brilliant, but overwrought, with many of the characteristics of great poetry but with none of its restraint. In the fervour of his bhakti Beschi finds his place with Nammālwar and Manikkavāsagar. In pressing poetry into the service of religion and metaphysics he recalls the Buddhist epic MANIMEKHALAI. In the purity and range of his diction, the variety and harmony of his verse, the splendour and truth of his descriptions, Beschi challenges comparison with Kamban and Thiruthakka-devar. No impartial critic who has read all the three will hesitate to place Beschi alongside of the Vaishnavite Bhakta and the Jaina ascetic. His poetry is as good as that of any poet subsequent to the Sangam epoch, far more true than that of the elegant versifiers who wrote Puranas in plenty, the best perhaps that any man ever wrote in a language not his mother tongue. Stephens, Beschi, Hanxleden — all three were Jesuits and poets: but Beschi's place is as much the more conspicuous as Tamil is more difficult than Konkani or Malayalam — the most difficult of Indian Languages after Sanskrit, and proud in her ancient literature and in the self-sufficiency of her vocabulary.

But it cannot be pretended that Beschi has had anything like justice done to him. His own contemporaries gave him the full measure of that romantic, semi-religious admiration that the Tamil world has always extended to its creative artists. Tradition has it that he was admitted as a member of the Sangam — which did not exist — and was allowed by his colleagues to add to his name the prefix

'great', *honoris causa*. The first generation of Englishmen who set themselves to the study of Tamil realised his value as a guide to the language. Thus Babington of the Madras Civil Service edited and translated the story of Guru Paramartha and the Grammar of Sen-Tamil. Ellis made a hobby of collecting manuscripts of Beschi's works. The Grammar of Kodum-Tamil was printed thrice in the first forty years of the last century. As recently as 1870 the Madras Government Press issued a dictionary 'based on that of Beschi'. The linguistic work of Beschi has suffered the fate of all pioneer attempts — its very effectiveness has been the cause of its partial effacement.

But the oblivion into which his poetry has fallen calls for an explanation. Dr. Pope demned as monotonous the whole Thembavani. The Tamilian has less excuse than the English savant.

But there is a faint hope of better things. Christian poets are to-day attracting more attention from Tamil scholars. The preparation of a book of selections from Beschi's poetical works is to be desired. That and the reprint of his linguistic works may facilitate the study of Tamil by foreign students. That again is a desideratum. For a language of such antiquity and with such abundance of literature of the first order, Tamil is barely known and little appreciated abroad. The revival of interest in Beschi may well be the spear-head of such a movement to make Tamil widely known.

Bharathi's Poems

DR. KAMIL ZVELEBIL

I

1. புதிய ஆத்திச்சூடி. This small work containing 110 aphorisms was composed by the poet in imitation of the didactic collection ஆத்திச்சூடி ascribed to the half-legendary old Tamil poetess ஔவையார்.[1] Bhārathi expressed his love and admiration for her work—which has become, in the course of time, actually a common treasure of Tamil people—in his own work several times, cf. his essay தமிழ் நாட்டு நாகரிகம்.

But this little collection of Bhārathi is not a mere imitation. Sometimes the poet does not tresspass against the form and contents of old traditional aphoristic literature (*e.g.* சீலம் இவ்வுலகு), but more often he fills the old aphoristic form with new sense and new life. An introduction of 110 verses gives expression to the poet's noble syncretism, as we know it also from various other places of his prose, *cf.* the essay யாரை தொழுவது : பரம் பொருள் ஒன்றே, "there is only one highest Ens"; truth is everywhere, in all faiths. We must be most tolerant.

In this little collection the poet wants to expose the essence of various religious systems, the gist of their ethical teaching. Some of this 110 maxims express ideas typical only for Bhārathi, and some of his commands and interdictions respond even to the movements and wants to the time of their

---

Dr. Kamil Zvelebil is Head of the Department of Dravidology, University of Prague.

1 The author's feuilleton about this poetess appeared in Novy Orient, Prague, 1952/VII/, p. 12.

origin. Here are some typical examples of general aphorisms which belong to the ethical canon of classical Tamil civilization (in a truly pregnant way this ethics had been expressed by the திருக்குறள் and by ஔவையார்). 4. Giving is wealth, 48. Know that god art thou, 82. Worship the plough etc. When reading no. 38. Worship the sun, we remember, accidentally, the beginning of the I. Canto of சிலப்பதிகாரம் : "Praised be the Sun ஞாயிறு போற்றுதும்!"

The very beginning of this little collection, however, is characteristic for the poet's conviction that, first of all, two qualities are necessary for everyone to be able to help in building a great and happy future for "Mother India": courage and industry. In many verses (let us remember only the admirable song ஜய பேரிகை "Drum of victory") and prose passages Bhārathi gives expression to his burning hate of two qualities choking all social and political progress of the Indian people: cowardice and sluggishness. And here we have the first maxim: அச்சந் தவிர் "Avoid fear" And then a series of aphorisms and saying expressing similar ideas: 3. Weariness is shameful, 19. Lassitude is bad, and further nos 5, 17, 36, 46. Some other maxims deal with the relation to work (19. கூடித் தொழில் செய which we would translate today with "Work collectively", 21. Do honour to manual work, 33. Work with purpose, 55. Spend the whole day working). There are other sayings which react upon the actual situation and express some claims of almost political and social nature (22. Withstand evil, 28. Destroy the destroyer, 30. Worship the hero,[2] 49. Love your country, 50. Venerate woman, 69. Strive for new things, 70. Don't leave the earth, 71. Be ever in quest of a greater thing, 110. Resist violence).

The language of this short collection is polished, classical, its lexical analysis proves the use of the old poetical expressions (மேழி "plough", சிறுவோர் "destroyer" etc.); in the sphere of morphology the poet prefers old forms, too (காலம் அழியேல் "Do not waste time", old prohibitive, etc.).

---

[2] We find in Bhārathi's work, not rarely, a sort of hero-worship, concerning especially Shivāji, Tilak and L. Lājpat Rāi.

This collection of 110 aphorisms is not, as a whole, a homogenous product, and so also our appraisement : we appreciate highly the motto of this collection—fearlessness and activity, or, better, fearless activity — this fundamental motive of all Bhārathi's work (and his own life) ; the more so as we know that in his time there had been tendencies to revive ascetic and monastic ideals, to forsake the world and its people. We appreciate highly these appeals for progress and these expressions of the poet's realistic attitude towards life. These ideas are much more plastically and emphatically proclaimed in the other two short collections, *பாப்பாப் பாட்டு* and *முரசு*.

II

2. *பாப்பாப் பாட்டு* is a collection of 16 stanzas (4 verses each) for children containing pithy and suggestive formulations of maxims and principles of life. This little collection is very important indeed ; it is, first of all, animated by a strong personal feeling, as it was written by the poet for his own younger daughter, *பாப்பா* *i.e.* Srimati N. Sakuntalā Bhārathi, living now in British North Borneo. I take the liberty to quote here from a letter sent to me by Srimati Thangammāḷ Bhārathi : "I must mention....an interesting incident connected with the origin of this particular poem. My sister Sakuntalā, when she was a babe, refused to obey her mother once, and when father came to know this he advised the child that she should obey her mother. Thus the very line *தாய் சொன்ன சொல்லைத் தட்டாதே பாப்பா* came out from his voice. Afterwards he wrote the whole piece advising the young ones in general.."

This collection, full of deep, gentle feeling, national pride and ideas of equality and truthfulness, belongs to some of the best poetic collections for children in general.

In the very first lines the poet incites his little daughter to play in collective manner with other children (*கூடி விளையாடு பாப்பா*). Some of the verses are more or less nursery rhymes, discovering a gay, beautiful, variegated world ;

they picture, *e.g.*, the cow, giving milk, the bull, ploughing a rice-field, the birds, the dog—a friend of man..Even here, however, the poet's tendency is expressed : to teach the child to see animals and things with a friendly, kind and grateful/
இவை ஆதரிக்க வேணும். eye.

After inciting the child to be active all the day, either in work or in play (in st. 6), Bhārathi proclaims several general ethical maxims and principles, some of them very modern and highly recommendable, in stanzas 7—100, awakes national pride and patriotic feelings in the child (stanzas 11-14) and in the last eight verses he sums up all his maxims in a lapidary and brilliant form in the three fundamental laws of *equality, verity and love.* It is obvious that the whole collection has thematically a firm design and formally an equally firm structure. From stanzas 7-10 resounds, again, the motto of his புதிய ஆத்திசூடி : *courage and industry.*

Teaching the child to love its motherland and, first of all, the mother-tongue, he not only requests to respect and honour it, but, he encourages also to learn it : அதைத் தொழுது படித்திடடி..And through his love to தமிழ்த் திரு நாடு he gets at loving his India (in st. 12) which he sees as a single whole from the Himalayas to Cape Comerin.

The last two stanzas belong to the best verses Bhārathi has ever written :

சாதிகள் இல்லையடி பாப்பா ; — குலத்
தாழ்ச்சி உயர்ச்சி சொல்லல் பாவம் ;
நீதி, உயர்ந்த மதி, கல்வி — அன்பு
நிறைய உடையவர்கள் மேலோர்.

உயிர்களிடத்தில் அன்பு வேணும் ; — தெய்வம்
உண்மை யென்று தானறிதல் வேணும் ;
வயிர முடைய நெஞ்சு வேணும் ; — இது
வாழும் முறைமையடி பாப்பா.

Here a verbal translation :

15. There are no castes, o Pāppā, it is a vice to say that people are inferior and superior by birth, wisdom, magnanimous behaviour and learning and fulness of love possess the exalted.

16. It is necessary to love / all / beings ;
it is necessary to know that God is truth in fact ;
it is necessary to have a heart that is adamant—
this is the rule of life, o Pāppā !

When analysing this little collection it is not necessary to inquire very deeply into the nature of its *formal structure,* which, in பாப்பாப் பாட்டு is not so important as *e.g.* in the brilliant lyrical poem குயில். But even from these verses for children it may be seen that the poet never neglects the form of his poems, that he knows that in verses for children more than elsewhere the form has its important function. And so we see, that side by side with the common எதுகை and other alliterations, consonances and assonances, there is, in some lines, a firm and regular inner sound-string, both of vowels and consonants.

Compare *e.g.* in the second stanza line 1 :

cinnan | ciru || kuruvi | pōlē - ni
where the vowel-sequence is
ia | iu || uui | ōēi,
or in the same stanza in line 2 :
tirintu | parantu | vā pāppā
there is a consonant-sequence
trnt | prnt | vppp,
interwoven with vowel-sequence
iuu | auu | āāā.

This is only a small instance of the regular sound-structure of the verses.

Important is the type of *language* used by the poet in this collection. It is natural in a collection which is determined for children to remember and sing in language that is simple, clear, chaste and sometimes almost colloquial (*e.g.* in stanzas 3, 5, 16 வேணும் is used instead of வேண்டும்) ; and, what is very interesting and important, there is the least possible ballast of Sanskrit words. In all the 16 stanzas there are only about 30 Sanskrit loans, and most of them are words quite usual and customary.

III

முரசு (Drum) is, undoubtedly, the best of Bhārathi's short collections. It was written most probably in 1914, at the end of the first period of Bhārathi's creative development ; the next year brings கண்ணன் பாட்டு a collection of quite different character, both in theme and form.

This poem of 31 stanzas might have for its motto the three ideas of equality, unity and love. The image of a drum is met with frequently in the poet's works (*cf.* ஜய பேரிகை). The introductory verses are a splendid sample of sound sequence and onomatopoeia ; when reading it, we actually hear short, regular, staccato drumming :

வெற்றி யெட்டுத் திக்கு மெட்டக்
கொட்டு முரசே.

The analysis of consonant — and vowel-structure reveals great regularity and a series of sound-formations, interwoven mutually in a firm pattern of sound sequence. So, *e.g.* in the second verse

(v t m | n r m || v lk | v nr)

we observe a single formation : v m nr || v v nr ; whereas in the 1st line.

(v rr | y tt || tt kk | m tt)

at least three consonant formations are observed:

1. v rr | y tt || - - | - -
2. - - | - tt || - - | - tt
3. - rr | - tt || - kk | - tt

Similarly in line 4:

(n tt | c kt || v lk | v nr) 1. n - | c - || v - | - ʌ
2. - tt | - kt || - lk | - nr

Vowel formations:

First verse: (e i | e u || i u | e a) 1. ei | - || iu | -
(o u | u a | ē). 2. - | eu || - | ea
1. ou | ua | -

2nd verse: (ē a | e u || ā a | e u) 1. ē a | - - || ā ā | - -
2. - - | e u || - - | e u

The very rhythm of those introductory verses is inspired by Shiva's and Shakti's dance (நெற்றிக்கண்ணனோடே.. நிர்த்தனஞ் செய்தாள்..சக்தி). Bhārathi formulated quite clearly his philosophical ideas on prose in many places. His conception is essentially a sort of energetic monism. Durgā-Shakti is the manifest energy of Shiva, the substance of all. Important is the stressing of the energetic side of this conception, and the idea of an inner evolution of this manifest being; from the actual and substantial unity of all existence follows the broad syncretic conception of the poet: in all religions and philosophies is a grain of truth, for god himself is truth (தெய்வம் உண்மை) and knowledge (அறிவே சிவம்); only the ways are different. From the conception of universal energy follows also Bhārathi's aversion to all quietism, his appeal to work, to be active and courageous, his respect for woman and his idea of *பாரத மாதா*. It is, however, necessary to avoid all flattening: his nationalism and radicalism, his revolutionary ideas are rooted in the socio-economic and political evolution of India in Bhārathi's time. But, this energetic shaktism did not interfere with his radical political ideas.

ஊருக்கு நல்லது சொல்வேன் — எனக்குண்மை தெரிந்தது சொல்வேன். This famous line is the true principle of all Bhārathi's life and work; if we analyse it profoundly and thoroughly it reveals its rich and important contents. To begin with, the poem is political in the very sense of this term, for the poet speaks to the polis (ஊருக்கு), to its people; he has something to say (சொல்வேன்) and he wants to say it clearly, frankly, in solid and proper words (நல்லது). What does he want to say? That, which he has found out to be the truth (உண்மை), he, the poet Bhārathi.

In stanzas 2-8 the poet deals with classes and castes. The key of this conception offers the 4th stanza: Bhārathi considers society as composed of four classes, which, after all, form only one (ஒன்றே) class of all men; and if you do away with any of these four, the whole society and working community of men will be destroyed. Let us emphasize the fact that the poet distinguishes here strictly between the term "class, section, division" (வகுப்பு) and the term "caste" (சாதி); the first is for him a section based on division of labour: for example, பார்ப்பான் is he who knows பல வித்தை, செட்டி is he who sells பண்டங்கள். Nothing is more shameful than to do nothing, than to be a sluggard (தொழில் சோம்பலைப் போல் இழிவில்லை). Thus he understands a class-society as a harmonious cooperative body of producers, sellers and buyers, guardians and intelligentsia, all working together for a common aim.

In further stanzas (after describing an ideal family, the father of which is its bread-winner, the mother of which looks after children and household and the children of which obey their parents and live in mutual love) he deals with caste (சாதி). Those who maintain that there are high and low castes give impulse to constant struggles and conflicts; it is no longer possible to observe the cruel rules of caste-system (சாதிக் கொடுமைகள்); on the contrary, it is absolutely necessary to sow the seeds of love in the community, to live in mutual support and to employ one's time with work (stanzas 7 and 8). In the 9th stanza the poet deals with

the case of women : they have to be educated and trained in various professions ; only a few blockheads (சில மூடர்) can refuse education to women. For our poet woman is absolutely equal to man : in stanza 10 he expresses this idea of equality with an apt comparison : Do we allow to destroy our sight by removing one of our eyes ? It is the same with woman : she is one of a pair of eyes — and only a pair can see correctly.

In the next stanzas Bhārathi deals with religious problems ; here, his broad and tolerant syncretism manifests itself in verses reminding one of some poems by Sarojini Naidu:

"The Brahmans worship fire—
and turned to one direction the Mussulmans pray.
In the church in front of a cross
the Christians praying stand."

But the essence of life, the god is only one, and absurd are all struggles in his name. The religious development of Bhārathi is a chapter in itself. His conception of the world is perhaps very close to that of the Bengal reform movements, especially those of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda (he very often quotes them). But it is necessary to emphasize that his religious ideas had not been well-balanced, that they yielded to development ; in a period, *e.g.*, he is under strong influence of Aurabinda Ghose. But his religious ideas are closely connected also with his political development with roots deeply in the nationalist movement incited mainly by Tilak. Sometimes, the religious and political ideas in Bhārathi's work conflict with one another, and then only a historical analysis helps us to elucidate this conflict : the fundamental break in an organic evolution of his ideas is Bhārathi's forced retirement from political and social life to the isolation and loneliness of Puducceri....

In stanzas 14-17 the poet fights against racial discrimination ; the colour does not count at all ; the characters and deeds of the people differ from each other.

O sound, drum of equality :
Why, all live on this wide earth.
O sound, drum of victory :
It is a lie — all bars of caste : (18)

The poet then proceeds : if all empty and false divisions (வெறுஞ் சூதுப் பிரிவுகள்) are broken, there will be no grief and sorrow. " O roll and rumble, thou drum of love : all people are equal ". These stanzas (18 19, 20) are connected very loosely in form, too, and they represent the first thematical culmination of the poem : in these verses culminate the ideas of equality, equality of castes, sexes, religions and races.

In further stanzas we meet another Bhārathi, as we know him from his prose : a sober realist, who sees things as they are. He maintains that there is enough nourishment for all in the wide world : only it has been wrongly distributed. All must work, all have to live by their work ; to rob the others of their respective share is shameful (23). It is absolutely inadmissible that the strong, the sound, the enterprising, the rich subjugate and devour (தின்று பிழைத்திடலாமோ) the weak, the ill, the poor (24). When reading these stanzas we remember the splendid song பாரத ஸமுதாயம் where, too,

மனித ருணவை மனிதர் பறிக்கும்
வழக்க மினி யுண்டோ ?

All forms of exploitation — of the poor by the rich, of the conquered nations by the imperialists, of the பறையர் and other " low " castes by the Brahmans, of women by men in India — all these forms of exploitation are condemned and rejected here.

Bhārathi discusses then the ideas which could be summed up under the title of noble and warm humanitarianism. It is, by the way, not out of place to show here that he attains his aim with the simplest and most current ideas of everyday family-life in clear and colloquial language : தம்பி சற்றே மெலிவானால் — அண்ணன் தானடிமை கொள்ளலாமோ ?

With the 27th stanza we approach the second thematical culmination of the poem, its finale.

பாருக்குள்ளே சமத்தன்மை — தொடர்
பற்றுஞ் சகோதரத் தன்மை
யாருக்குந் தீமை செய்யாது — புவி
யெங்கும் விடுதலை செய்யும்.

Equality in the world — and
to hold fast a chain of fraternity,
to do no harm to anybody — and everywhere
on the earth to give freedom.[3] (29)

And, again, it is necessary to feed all and to educate all (30) ; thou, o drum, sound and sound an appeal to love and unity of all people of this wide world (31). These words are not mere slogans and fine-sounding phrases. Bhārathi, whose political ideas (not exempt, naturally, from all foreign influence) are first of all, the expression of the first attack of a young, pugnacious, democratic, relatively progressive bourgeoisie in the first decade of our century, and the expression of consistently modified ideas of the "left", "orthodox" nationalists, does not stick to mere slogans, to mere verbal formulations. He fights with his word and deed. Liberté, égalité, fraternité — each of these words has, in Bhārathi's work, a deep and a broad meaning: equality breaks, before all, the system of castes, and it means equality between man and woman. Liberty, for him, is, first off all, social freedom, freedom for all to work and enjoy the fruit of their work (*cf.* the songs விடுதலை and தொழில்). And fraternity manifests itself quite concretely by the simple necessity that all shall work and all get food and shelter and education. முரசு belongs, in spite of a few verses carrying the ballast of old traditions and prejudices, to the best of modern Indian poetry. It is a revolutionary poem, a progressive work which wants to show the people the way to get at the goal — a happy and full life of all in India.

---

[3] Here it is interesting to note some neologisms created by the poet: சகோதரத்தன்மை "fraternity" and சமத்தன்மை "equality".

In this short collection Bhārathi succeeds also in uniting the form and contents perfectly. The basis of the formal structure of the whole collection are two principles:

1. the initial alliterative "rhyme" according to the scheme *aabb*;
2. the எதுகை according to the scheme *abac*.

Cf. stanza 13:

yārum..	1.	y —	2. *yārum*..
yāvinum.		y —	— —
pārukkullē..		p —	*pārukkullē*..
parpala..		p —	— —

Side by side with this regular scheme there is a very complicated pattern of various consonant and vowel-strings and sequence, very happily intervowen. The rhythm is based on a strictly regular alternation of verses of eight and ten syllables each.

The language of this collection is very near to that of தேசிய கீதங்கள் and of other of Bhārathi's political and nationalistic poetry. The main characteristic of those patriotic songs are the lapidary simplicity, brevity, terseness and pithiness of their language. About 1915-16 there comes a change in the development of the poetical diction of Bhārathi: it becomes more polished, full-sounding, metaphorical, brilliant, but, at the same time, rich beyond measure and too dazzling and ornamental in some stanzas of குயில் and கண்ணன் பாட்டு. In முரசு — a poem which is distinctly political — the poet addresses the people, all people of his beloved தமிழ் நாடு. The type of the language used is masterly adaptation to this social determination of the poem.

Castes in South India : The Problem of Their Origin

M. AROKIASWAMI M.A., PH.D.

SIR GEORGE BIRDWOOD, a careful student of Indian society wrote that "so long as the Hindus hold to the caste system, India will be India ; but from the day they break from it, there will be no more India".[1] Whatever the views one may have about the advantages and disadvantages of the system there could be no doubt that it forms a clearly distinguishing feature of Indian culture.

How did this system originate? This is a question that has exercised many minds for a long time. The general impression however remains that the Āryans introduced caste system into India. While this is not the entire truth of the matter it is certain that the system was in a large measure a natural growth arising out of the Indian genius and basic conception of division of labour. When the Āryans entered the north of India there were already distinctions among themselves based on the natural capacities and aptitudes of the individuals. Those who were interested in religious matters and were conversant with the forms and technicalities of religion were one section ; the fighters were another; those who satisfied the economic needs of the people were a third class. Thus the three traditional Indian castes, the Brāhman, the Kshtriyā, and the Vaisyā were formed. The

M. Arokiaswami is lecturer in the Department of History and Archaeology of the University of Madras.

1 Birdwood; *Industrial Communities*.

Sudrā was apparently not one outside them but those who belonged to a class of people who were engaged in menial services. The aliens, the dāsiyus, as the Aryans called those outside their fold became the untouchables, the 'outcastes', as they are expressly called to this day.

In the south of India people lived in large numbers also long before the Āryan invasion. The so-called Dravidians were the sons of the soil and native to South India. It was from here that they filled the whole of India and even beyond. Tamil literature bearing on early times does not however refer to many castes in South India. An old verse, whose author is unknown, has it :

"துடிவன், மறவன், கடம்பன், பறையன்
என்று இந்நாள் கல்லது குடியுமில்லை",

which would imply that the drummer (beater on the 'thudi'), the 'Maravā' or the fighter, the 'Kadamban' or the man living on hill-tops and the 'Paraiyan' (another kind of drummer) were the only ancient castes in this region. The *Tolkāppiyam*, which depicts the state of society at least seven centuries before the Christian era mentions only the shepherds (āyar) and the vedar (hunters) as among the prominent castes :

"ஆயர் வேட்டுவர் ஆடூஉத் திணைப்பெயர்"[2]

Thus there is clear indication here that as people developed and with them their functions in life different castes seem to have risen. It is noteworthy that in the beginning even these new castes were getting known by their functions rather than by any other differentia. Thus the same ancient Tamil grammar to which reference has been made earlier mentions four other castes which are distinct professions, the *arivar* (men of knowledge, who became later known as 'Brahmans'), *ulavar* (those who plouged the land, who became later the 'Vellalas'), the *arasar* (those who ruled, equivalent to the northern 'Kshtriyā) and the *vanigar* (Traders).[3]

---

2 Tolkappiyam ; *agatinai*, 21.
3 Ibid ; *Puratinai*, 20.

In the process of development of castes in South India the general impression even among students of South Indian society is that the Brahman from the north played the most prominent role and that he set up a social system akin to what obtained in the north. It is to this that I have referred as being not the whole truth earlier in this paper, because while there is no definite mention of the incoming of the Brahmans from the north in any of our early records, Naccinarkiniyar, the well-known and learned commentator of the *Tolkappiyam* mentions definitely the coming of Vellālā and Kshtiryā families into the south from the north of India. The passage occurs in his comment to the *payiram* or preface of the great grammar; and the reference is to the incoming of the sage Agastiyā—the preceptor of the sage of the *Tolkappiyam* :—

> "All the gods having gathered on the Mount Meru, the mount went down with their weight, and the South rose up, whereupon they chose Agastiyar as the right man to be in the south to redress it balance. The gods requesting Agastiya, he was soon on his way to the south, when he entered into Dwaraka and took along with him 18 kings and 18 families of vels and Aruvalar of the progeny of the 'high crowned Lord who measured the earth' gave them homes, having destroyed forests......bound Ravana from mischief and having prevented the Rakshasas from coming there, settled himself on the Pothiyil (hills)."

The point to be further noted is that this entry of the 'kings' and the 'vellālās' to which reference is made here took place at the time and along with the so-called invasion of the Āryans. Besides the general view that Agastiyā "represents and stands for the concrete symbol of the adventurous spirit of the early Āryans",[4] the reference in the comment above cited to Agastiyā binding Rāvanā from mischief clearly indicates that as early as the time of Naccinarkiniyar the view was accepted that the Agastiyan advent into the south typified the entry of the Āryans into that region. Hence it has to be maintained that when we speak of the Āryan invasion

---

[4] Ganguly; Quarterly Journal of Mythic Society, XVII, 170.

of the south we have to understand by it not merely the incoming of the Brahmans but also of other castes of which three at least must be specially mentioned, namely the Kshtriya, the Vellālā and the Aruvālar.

It is not possible to define who are meant by the term, 'aruvālar'. Possibly they were sheep-grazers. The *Pattinappalai,* however, depicts them in alliance with the Irukkuvēls, who were a prominent Vellālā family of the period.[5] We are thus sure that the Kshtriyas and the Vellālās also entered into the south from north India. They too might have been Āryans or perhaps Dravidians who had migrated to the north. The evolution of the caste system as it is found in South India to-day was therefore a result of all these peoples working together during a long number of years ; and during all this period it was the quality and the nature of the function of the individual that determined his caste, until at least the eighteen castes of South India became definitely stratified.

Thus we have the famous couplet in the *Kural,*

"அந்தணர் என்போர் அறவோர் மற்றெவ்வுயிர்க்கும்
செந்தண்மை பூண்டொ ழுகலான்"[6]

which emphasises quality as the criterion by which to distinguish the Brahman from the rest. There was no hard and fast rule dividing the various castes in the beginning. We have examples of Brahmans marrying into Vellālā families ; and the example of the Brahman poet, Kapilar, calling the daughters of the Vellālā chieftain Pāri as his own and his getting them married to a Brahman must be instructive in this connection. Numerous vellālās ruled as powerful chieftains all through the Sangam period and there is a doubt that even the Kings of the three ruling houses the Colā, Pāndyā and the Cerā were themselves Vellālās. Of this much at least we are sure that great kings of these houses, like Karikālā the Colā and Ceran Senguttuvan married the daughters of Vellālā families like the Nānkur Vēl and Alumbil Vēl.

---

5 *"தொல்லருவாளர் தொழிற் கேட்ப*
இருங்கோ வேண்மான் மருங்குசாய",

See *Pattinappalai,* lines 274-282 ; also the *Maduraikkanji,* line 55 and the comment thereon.

6 Tirukural, III, 10.

As the Vellālās showed a tendency to rise high in the social scale the lower castes also were making an attempt in the same direction. The common lines,

" கள்ளர் மறவர் கனத்தால் அகமுடையர்
மெல்ல மெல்ல வந்து வெள்ளாளர் ஆவார் "

bear a meaning and they would not have gained currency, if they did not portray the true situation. At the same time the Vellālā became the progenitor of numerous other castes each of which became disignated by a different name according to its occupation. Thus we have the Vellān-Chettis, who from being cultivators became traders, Vellān-Mudalis etc.

In yet another way even barbers and dhobies and even the drummer (paraiyar) evolved from the same Vellālā caste. In the Kongu country of ancient times comprising the modern districts of Salem and Coimbatore we have a group of castes designated as Kongu-barber, Kongu-dhoby, and Kongu-paraiya, who are none else but Vellālās. It would appear that when Āditya Colā colonised this tract of South India with numerous Vellālā families from the Colā country the Vedar seem to have been most powerful in the region ; and far from helping the new comers and cooperating with them forbade their dhobies and barbers to serve them. As a result of this the Vellālās had to shift for themselves, and this led on to the formation of the castes of the barber and the dhoby from among themselves to serve their needs. Tradition still kept alive in this part of South India bears evidence to this and the Kongu barber particularly is now held in esteem as against the Vettuva (Veduva) barber, who comes from the line of barbers who were serving the Vedar of old. The chuckler or leather worker is a later-day introduction into the Tamil country from the Andhra desa ; he still talks Telugu and is considered as inferior to the Paraiya. The Nāidus, the Okkiliyar, and the Tottiyans are also later introduction from the empire of Vijayanagar.

History of Tamil Language and Literature

BY

S. VAIYAPURI PILLAI

BEGINNING TO 300 A.D.

THE oldest representative of the Dravidian group of languages is Tamil. The other languages belonging to this group are Telugu, Kannada, Malayālam, Gondi, Kolami, Kui, Kurukh, Malto and Brāhui. Tamil and Telugu in the east of the Deccan and Kannada and Malayālam in the west form one compact block.

Tamil language is a composite texture of three elements *viz.*, the Munda, the Dravidian and the Āryan, the Dravidian elements predominating. The Sabara dialect of Munda, it is said, is mixed up with Dravidian.[1] Instances of words of Āryan and Dravidian origins may easily occur to one's mind. A comparative vocabulary of the Munda dialects, the Dravidian and the Āryan languages is bound to throw much light in distinguishing these several elements.

The northern groups of people, like the Gōnds, speaking the Dravidian tongues are of a very low culture. They live next to the Munda-speaking aborigines. The Dravidians of the south on the other hand, are highly cultured and their languages have given rise to refined literatures, probably under

---

1 Elements of the Science of Language, Calcutta University, 1951, p. 213.

the influences of Sanskrit literature. "Telugu Literature", says J. Bloch, 'is not earlier than the year 1000; the oldest Kannada text dates from about 500; Tamil literature is doubtless older.' He also adds that all the Dravidian alphabets are derived from alphabets of Northern India of the fourth or fifth century A.D. The origin of the Dravidian alphabets may be accepted but the date of the script so far as Tamil is concerned may be questioned. The Brāhmi inscriptions found in Tamil areas (Madurai and Tirunelveli) are in Tamil language and are assignable to third or second century B.C. In the early Sangam period the word 'nūl'[2] occurs in the sense of 'technical treatise' and names were inscribed on memorial stones.[3] Moreover we know that the Tamilian civilization was such as to command the respect of Emperor Asoka. Megasthenes and Kātyāyana may be cited to show that the Tamilian dynasties were well-known at least about the fourth century B.C., if not earlier. We do not know when these dynasties came into existence.[4] With such a civilization and with ruling dynasties of such high antiquity, we may not be far wrong if we assume that the Brāhmi script was adopted for literary purposes in Tamil about the first or second century B.C. and assign the beginnings of written Tamil literature to the same period. Earlier than this, there must have been oral literature traditionally handed down from generation to generation for some centuries.

But the beginnings of Tamil language must be far earlier. Attempts have been made to prove the antiquity of Tamil on linguistic grounds. For instance, Ktesias (401 B.C.) describes an odorous oil produced from an Indian tree having flowers like the laurel which the Greeks called 'murōrōda', but which in India was called 'kārpion'. Dr. Caldwell[5] is inclined to identify this Indian word with the Tamil-Mala-

---

2 *E.g.* Nedunalvādai, 1. 76; Madurai-k-Kanji, 1. 645, Siru-pan. 1. 230.

3 Puram 260, 264.

4 *Cf.* Parimelalagar, on Kural 955, Comm.

5 *A Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian Languages 1913* edn. pp. 89-91. The word does not occur in ancient or mediaeval Tamil.

yālam *Karuppa* or *Karuva* (cinnamon) and comes to the conclusion that we have here the earliest Dravidian word quoted by the Greeks. But *Karuva* [5-a] is a recent word in Tamil and bears the very suspicious appearance of being of a foreign origin. 'Karuppa' is unknown in Tamil, unless it is assumed to be a corruption of *karuppu* and there is no warrant for this assumption. Two other words much relied upon by Caldwell are the Hebrew words *tuki* for peacock and *ahalim* (aloe) occurring respectively in the Hebrew Bible in the passages corresponding to 'For the king Solomon (c. 1000 B.C.) had at sea a navy of Tharsish, bringing gold, and silver, ivory, and apes and peacocks, and I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes and cinnamon.[6] "*Tuki*" meaning peacock, has been sought to be traced to the Tamil *tokai*. No doubt the word bears this sense even in the earliest Tamil literature.[7] But it had not this meaning in the first instance. Its earliest meaning was only 'tail' in general.[8] In the sister languages of the Dravidian group, the word has only this meaning of 'tail'. Later, it acquired, by restriction of usage, the specific sense of peacock's tail and then, by figure of speech, the sense of peacock, as noted above and, later still by constant poetic simile, its meaning was extended to beautiful woman as in 'Tōkaipākarkku'.[9] Thus the respective words in Tamil and Hebrew do not agree in their primary meaning and the etymology itself is not free from doubt. The Hebrew and Tamil word might be from the word Latin, to-ga. Then again Hebrew *ahalim* is considered to be from the Tamil *agil*. But the Tamil word is of a later date than Skt. *agaru*, and Caldwell himself admits the possibility of connection between the Hebrew and the Sanskrit word. He suggests also that the word might be derived from the Tamil *alagu*. But Alagu itself is a rare word in ancient Tamil and

---

5-a Rev. H. Gundert derives the word Karappu (Karuva), in his Malayālam Dictionary, from Ar. qarfah and gives the meaning Herodot's Karphea (Karpūram). This seems the most satisfactory derivation.

6 I Kings 10, 22; Proverbs VII, 17.

7 Ainkurunuru 297, Kuruntogai 26.

8 *Aham*, 13, 122.

9 Kamban: Tiruvavatāra, 10.

does but occur twice in the earliest literature.[10] It is not found in other Dravidian languages. Probably it is connected with Skt. 'laghu' meaning beautiful. Apart from geographical names adopted by Greek writers, *arisi* (rice) seems to be the only Tamil word borrowed by the Greeks. But here also we cannot shut our eyes to the possibility of *arisi* or its earlier form '*ari*' being of Sanskrit origin (vrihi).[11] Caldwell's statement that the Malayālam word *ari* is a corruption is clearly wrong, as it is found in the earliest Tamil literature,[12] and in Kannada and Tulu. Even if the Greek word Oryza be ultimately proved to be of Tamil origin, the date of its borrowing is not ascertainable.

Some scholars have persuaded themselves that the inscribed seals from the Indus valley support the high antiquity of Tamil. But as Patrick Carleton [13] has observed 'neither Prof. Langdon nor any other responsible authority has ventured to decide in what language the inscriptions are written, still less to offer a translation.'[14]

Leaving such speculations on pre-history, and turning our attention to literature, we may note at once that the date of the Brāhmi inscriptions gives us a limit beyond which it may not be possible to go. It must be borne in mind that literature can thrive only when the art of writing has come into general practice among the learned. So we have to conclude that there was no written Tamil literature in the accepted sense of the term, before the third century B.C., if the date generally assigned to the Brāhmi inscriptions is correct. It should also be remembered that the Brāhmi script in Tamil inscriptions is in its formative stage.

---

10 Perum-pān. 1. 252. It gains in frequency as time passes on. Tolkāppiyar gives this word.

11 Przyluski, *Nom Du Riz, Etudes Asiatiques.*

12 *Malaipadu-kadām,* 1. 180.

13 Buried Empires: Edwin Arnold & Co., 1944, p. 141. Indus Civilisation by Ernest Mackay, 2nd edition.

14 Piggott: Prehistoric India (1950) pp. 178-181.

As regards the script itself it goes back, according to G. Buhler, to a semitic origin[15] and its characters are found in Phoenician inscriptions. Probably it was introduced into India about 800 B.C., by merchants. It must have been, for a long time, used entirely for commercial purposes, correspondence, calculations etc. Later on it began to be used also for the minutes of embassies, proclamations etc. in the Royal Chanceries, and the kings must have employed learned persons for such purposes. These men adapted the foreign alphabet more and more to the needs of Indian phonetics and out of the 22 semitic characters, elaborated a complete alphabet of 44 letters of Sanskrit as the oldest inscriptions already show it. In the Buddhist canon completed about 240 B.C., there are sufficient proofs of an acquaintance with the art of writing and its extensive use at that time.[16] There seems to be a consensus of opinion among scholars that the Āryans came to South India about 700 B.C. In the Tamil land, it is only the Buddhists and the Jains who first used this script for the Tamil language and we may legitimately infer that they introduced it just as they had found it in vogue among their communities in the North. With the exception of sounds peculiar to Northern languages, the alphabetic arrangement is identical both in Sanskrit and in Tamil; for the sounds peculiar to Tamil, like the short e and o, the letters for their long sounds are used with some modifications. This shows clearly that the alphabetic system from which the Tamil language adopted its alphabet must be lacking in short e and o and this is exactly the case with Sanskrit. For these reasons we have to conclude that the Tamil alphabet is of northern origin. The script was in all probability used for recording literary productions (mainly religious) in Sanskrit and Pāli, about the third or fourth cent. B.C. For literary works in Tamil (mainly secular), it was adopted probably about first or second B.C. Though the

15 The Old Testament and Modern Study: Edited by Rowbey. Clarendon Press. pp. 270-1. Available evidence seems to show that all the alphabets of the world are traceable to one source.—Frederick Bodomer: The Loom of Language p. 49.

16 Winternitz, H.I.L. pp. 31-40.

Tamil vatteluttu is held by some to be of indigenous origin, experts agree that the Asokan script is the mother of all Indian scripts.

But tradition says that there existed three Tamil Sangams or Academies in which Tamil literary works were 'heard' and assessed, the first academy lasting for 4440 years, the second for 3700 and the third for 1850. Altogether these three Sangams lasted for 9990 years. Since scholars hold that the last phase of the third Sangam was coeval with the beginning of the Christian Era, the first Sangam, according to this tradition, must have come into existence about B.C. 10,000! This tradition is recorded in the commentary of Iraiyanār Ahapporul, written perhaps about the 13th century A.D. Gods also are said to have participated in the deliberations of the first Sangam. We may leave such fables alone and seek for historical truth elsewhere.

In this traditional account, a certain poet, Muranjiyūr Mudi Nāgarāyar is said to have been a member of the first Academy. To this poet is ascribed the second stanza of Puranānūru, (which contains some of the earliest of Tamil poems) in which a Chēra King is said to have fed impartially both the contending armies of the Mahābhārata battle. It is argued from this that the poet, the academy and the king were all contemporaneous with the Great battle which is believed to have taken place at the beginning of the Kaliyuga, *i.e.* 3102 B.C. Hence Tamil literature, the protagonists of this view say, must have had its beginnings anterior to 3102 B.C. But not even the most extensive redaction of the great epic in Sanskrit contains this story about the Chēra monarch. The Tamil poem is in fact just a eulogy on the benevolence of the king and nothing more. A Chōla king also claims to have been the head of the commissariat department in this Bharata war.[17] The Pāndyas claimed to be the descendants of Pāndavas, Arjuna marrying Chitrāngada the Pāndya princess. These stories should not be taken seriously. Says

---

17 Kalingattupparani 181.

Winternitz[18] 'Indian Kings were just as fond of tracing their ancestry back to those who fought in the Bharata battle as European princes were anxious to prove their descent from the heroes of the Trojan war.[18-a] I consider it as entirely contrary to historical criticism to draw chronological conclusions ....from this fiction.'

References in Tamil literature have also been pressed into service to prove its high antiquity. One such instance occurs in Nachchinārkkiniyar's commentary on *nānmarai* in the prefatory verse to *Tolkāppiyam.* He says that *Tolkāppiyam* was written long before Vyāsa classified the Vedas into four great collections ! A second instance is furnished by the stanzas[19] which refer to the *Mōriyas* and the *Nandas* as well as to the *Kōsar* and *Mōhūr.* These references discussed by me fully elsewhere,[20] give no support for a date anterior to the Christian era for the extant Sangam literature.

One other reference has been made much of by some Tamil scholars.[21] In the prefatory stanza of *Tolkāppiyam* the oldest extant Tamil grammar, Tolkāppiyar, its author, is referred to as one thoroughly versed in *Aindram.* As Aindram is deemed to be one of the pre-Pāninian systems and as Pānini is generally assigned to B.C. 4th century, it is argued that Tolkāppiyar must have composed his great work at least in the 5th century B.C. There must have been a considerable body of Tamil literature before Tolkāppiyar and this literature must be of far greater antiquity. True ; but the argument is reared on wrong premises.[22] Aindra was not the name of any particular work, but the name of a grammatical system ascribed to the god Indra.[23] It is pre-Pāninian ; but

---

18 H.I.L. Vol. I p. 523 fn. 2.

18-a *Cf.* Rapson, *Cambridge History* 1 p. 307.

19 Puram. 175 ; Aham. 69, 251, 281.

20 Ilakkiya Deepam : pp. 131-144.

21 Tamil Studies : M. Srinivāsa Iyengār.

22 For a full discussion of the subject, see Tamil-chudar-manigal pp. 27-39.

23 Belvelkar ; Systems of Sanskrit Grammar p. 11.

the name 'Aindra' itself is *post*-Pāninian and Pānini does not mention it. The *Aindra* system continued to exist long after Pānini, and it was followed by the Jainas and some others. *Kātantra*, variously assigned to third or 4th century A.D.[24] is a representative of the system. Consequently any reference to Aindra is no proof for a pre-Pāninian date. Even supposing that the name Aindra were pre-Pāninian, there is nothing to prevent a later author from mentioning the Aindra and making use of it in his work. The highly technical and artificial system of Pānini could not be adapted for Tamil, a language of an altogether different genius.

Contrary to the above view, a reference in Puranānūru has been urged by a scholar, in support of a *late* date, 10th century A.D. for the earliest of the extant works of Tamil literature. In st. 201 of this collection, Kapilar says of Irungō-vēl that he is a chieftain of the family of Vēlir whose progenitor, forty-nine generations before, made his advent out of the sacrificial pit of a northern sage and ruled Dvāraka. This tradition refers to the origin of the Solanki Rajputs. An inscription of Yuvarāja II of the Kāllachuri dynasty mentions a similar tradition. About the origin of the Chalukyas also, a similar tradition is recorded. There are also other records of the tradition.[25] The conflicting versions of this wide-spread tradition render its evidence of doubtful value. In the same *Puram* stanza and in the next (202), its hero is called 'Pulikattimāl', meaning 'the great one who vanquished a tiger'. This reminds us of the usual origin given for the term 'Hoysala'. We can only say that this evidences the existence of the tradition in the 6th century A.D. But to accept the 10th cent. theory, on this basis is to throw over-board the entire history and development of Tamil language and literature. This theory may be dismissed as summarily as that of the three Sangams.

---

24 Keith, *Sanskrit Literature* p. 431.

25 Indian Antiquary, VII, 74; Bombay Gazetteer IV 339; Ep. Ind. XV p. 106; Epigraphia Carnatica, Hassan 65 and 66.

It is only the Greek writers of the 1st and 2nd centuries A.D. who furnish us with reliable data for fixing the antiquity of Tamil literature. Of these, the earliest was Strabo, an Asiatic Greek who wrote his Geography in the first quarter of the first century A.D. Mention is made by him of an embassy sent to Augustus on his accession by an important king, called Pōrus by some, and Pāndian by others.[26] Critics incline with good reason to the view that it must be Pōrus, a generic name with Greek writers for an Indian King. But Strabo had to rely for his information about India mainly upon previous writers. The few bold sailors who went as far as the mouth of the Ganges and who could give information were ignorant men, ill-qualified to describe what they had seen. Pliny the Elder set to work at his encylopaedic Natural History and completed it in the year 77 A.D. The sixth book of this history contains a valuable description of Ceylon and an interesting account of a voyage to the Indian coast. He tells us that passengers preferred to embark at Barake in the Pāndya country, rather than at Muziris on account of pirates.[27] Barake was the port for the pepper trade, Kottonāra (Kuttanad) being the centre of the pepper area. To about the same time (C. 80 A.D.) belongs the Periplus Maris Erythraei.

All these works give us an idea of the trade of the Tamil country with the west which agrees substantially with the indications on the same subject in the early Tamil poems. There are ten references to Yavanas in this early literature. An *Aham* stanza (149) mentions the flourishing Musiri where the Yavanas[28] come in their finely-shaped vessels loaded with gold specie and return freighted with pepper. These vessels entering rapidly in good numbers are said to agitate to foam the waters of the great river Chulli. Another stanza (57)

26 Rawlinson: India and the Western World, pp. 107-108.

27 Rawlinson, *op. cit.* pp. 111-112.

28 Some scholars have expressed the view that the references to Yavana merchants might be in regard to Arab or Persian merchants. But the corroboration comes from Greek sources, which puts this view entirely out of court.

from the same collection describes this Musiri as a sea-port. A *Puram* stanza (343) says that the pepper heaped in house-yards in Musiri are put in bags and these bags make the *sea-board* groan with their weight. Further it says that the gold (specie) which the sea-going vessels bring are taken ashore by the small crafts plying in backwaters. Another port which we find mentioned in these works is Tondi (GK. Tyndis) and there are as many as 24 references to it. In all these references, however, we do not gain any historical information except that it was a flourishing sea-port (mun-turai : Kurun. 128) belonging to the Chēras on the West Coast.

The references to Musiri, it should be noted, are in the present tense and we may legitimately infer that the poets who mention it in their poems lived at a period when that famous sea-port became commercially important and was consequently much frequented by Yavana merchants. Southern ports including this Musiri became the centre of commercial activity only after the discovery of the monsoons by Hippalus in c. 45 A.D. The Periplus was written about 80 A.D.[29] The Yavana trade declined about the beginning of 3rd century A.D. Considering the fact that the literary references to Musiri tally very much with what the Periplus has to say about this ancient port, the conclusion is forced upon us that the poets who made these references lived between 100 A.D. and 250 A.D. Another important fact also confirms this. Ptolemy (d. 150 A.D.) knew of Āy and his mountainous country. This chieftain is praised in more than fifteen stanzas of Puranānūru. No doubt the limit is only approximate but this is as near the truth as we can ever hope to reach.

This conclusion is strengthened by a recorded tradition. The *Silappadikāram*, one of the *pancha kāvyas*, says that when King Senguttuvan, a celebrated king of the Sangam period had raised a temple to Kannagi, made grants of lands etc., to the deity and arranged for her daily *puja*, he

---

29 It is fairly certain that the Periplus was written between 80 and 90 A.D. and nearer 80 than 90; Rawlinson p. 106 f.n.

went round the temple and stood at its entrance paying obeisance. Then Gajabāhu of Ceylon and other kings prayed in the presence of the great king (Senguttuvan) that the goddess might be pleased to sanctify with her presence the festivals which they would be conducting in her honour in their own capitals. Of course the prayer was granted.[30] This tradition makes Senguttuvan a contemporary of King Gajabāhu of Ceylon, presumably the first of this name. According to Geiger, this king ruled from A.D. 171 to 193. Hence Senguttuvan who, according to Padirruppattu (V) ruled for 55 years, may be roughly assigned to 170-226 A.D. He was the grandson of Udiyan-Sēralātan and calculating at the average of 25 years per ruler, the latter must have lived c. 130 A.D. we may be reasonably certain that the chronological conclusion reached above is historically sound and no poet of Sangam Age could have been earlier than the second century A.D. But we are as yet far from the beginning of Tamil literature.

The earliest strata of Tamil literature now known to us contain several grammatical terms and also several conventionalised literary usages which argue an earlier period when linguistic investigations and speculations were rife and when grammatical notions and categories were defined. For instance, one of the earliest poets who has sung about Udiyan-Sēralātan, mentioned above says that Duryodhana and his brothers wore the golden flower tumbai, and fought against the Pāndavas (Puranānūru 2). Here we have evidence of a well-established literary convention. This shows that such conventions had been settled at a period far earlier than the date of the poet. Another instance : One early poet Kapilar has sung a centum of poems on love-themes of Kurinji (Ainkurunūru III) and a long poem Kurinji-p-pāttu on the same theme. Another poet has sung Mullai-p-pāttu. These show that the five-fold classification and the naming of tinais, the

30 *Silap.* XXX ll. 151-164. This Kāvya, though it has no claim to historicity may be taken (in this particular) to embody a genuine tradition. Its Urai-peru-Katturai, (3) mentions that Gaja-bāhu only *heard* about the sacrificial offering to Kannagi. This variation is significant.

particular love aspect to be dealt with in each tinai and other relevant matters had all been settled long prior to Kapilar. These are all conventions. Purely grammatical terms also are found used by these early poets. For instance, the term 'Uyartinai' occurs in st. 224 of Kurrundogai. It is well-known that in Tamil, nouns are divided into '*class noble and hors classe*' in the phraseology of Prof. Jules Bloch, answering respectively to *uyartinai* and *ahrinai*.

These instances are sufficient to prove the existence of earlier works embodying the conventions and treating of the subject-matter which belong properly to the province of grammar. It might be said that the Tolkāppiyam would answer the purpose. Tolkāppiyar's definition of tumbai does not tally with the use of the term in the instance above noted. So, the author of Puranānūru 2 must have had some other grammar in view. Moreover Tolkāppiyar must be assigned to a later date as already indicated and these poets must have preceded him *at least* by about three centuries. It may also be pointed out that Tolkāppiyar himself refers in a general way to several grammarians and none of their works are now extant. Very probably, the early Sangam poets had these grammars for their guidance. We must allow ample time for this grammatical literature to spring up and develop. About a century perhaps, may be necessary for this.

These grammatical treatises again imply a vast amount of literature upon which they can base their rules and conventions. Even if we allow two centuries for this literature to develop, we shall have to place the beginnings of Tamil literature about the second century B.C. One other fact also must be borne in mind. The style, the diction and the metrical perfection of the Sangam poems require for their development a considerably long period. At a rough computation, we may put this period of development as two or three centuries from the date of the earliest Sangam poems.

Looking beyond these long centuries, we get a glimpse of a period when the Brāhmi inscriptions were in vogue. They show the Tamil script in its early stage and from this stage

upto its full development and its adoption for literary purposes, the above estimate allows sufficient interval: Development in language, script and literature must have been going on at a rapid pace. Powerful influences must have been at work during this period as evidenced by the Brāhmi inscriptions themselves. The words Kutumbika, Illa etc., and the circumstances in which the inscriptions were written tell their own tale. Contact with Sanskrit and Prākrit languages and literatures, with adjacent countries like Ceylon, and with the Buddhist and the Jaina religions must have been largely instrumental in shaping the Tamil mind. The continuous influx of people from the North must also have had its influence. Thus the even tenor of the life of the ancient Tamilian was ruffled and invigorated, a desire was created in him to emulate Sanskrit and Prākrit literature. The religious and moral side of the ancient Tamilian was given a new turn by the influences noted above. But the secular side, especially in the lower strata of the ancient Tamilian Society, remained uninfluenced and it went on very much as before. The earliest literature would have necessarily its root deep in the native soil of the Tamils and this literature must have been in verse. For in the literatures transmitted to us, poetry is found in every country to precede prose.

The Tamil literature in its beginnings must for ever remain a matter for speculation. During the first decade of the present century, a small work (of about ten pages of demy 16mo) bearing the title Sengōnrarai-celavu appeared in print, claiming to be a production of the First Tamil Sangam and it was said to have been composed in tāppulippā metre! The spurious nature of the work was soon found out and no responsible scholar took any serious notice of it. The commentary on Iraiyanār Ahapporul has, in its description of the literary activities of the first two Sangams, mentioned a number of works which are mere names. The semi-mythical character of the account puts these works beyond the pale of historical investigation. Again Adiyārkku-

nallār in his commentary on Silappadikāram[30-a] has given us the names of a few works. But these are works treating of the same subject-matter as Bharata Nātya Sāstra and apparently they are of late origin. However, Tolkāppiyar is of some help in this connection. He mentions certain genre or types of literary composition, of which we have no representative at present. His commentators are hard put to find examples and no writer, since his time, has mentioned these types barring grammarians who have transmitted faithfully what they had learnt from his work. Of such genre I may mention '*angadam*', a kind of lampoon, *pisi*, a kind of riddle-poem and *pannatti*[31] whose nature is not now known. There must have also been a number of works in Ahaval metre ending in consonants like n etc. similar to the Silappadikāram and the Manimēkalai, works embodying stories of ancient times known as 'tonmai' and works in mixed prose and verse. Tolkāppiyar speaks of translations also; but we are not vouchsafed any information as regards the language from which the translations were made. Probably he is referring to Sanskrit and Prākrit languages. Even these types mentioned by Tolkāppiyar are of an advanced nature. The primitive Tamil literature remains a mystery as much as ever and our guesses must follow in general the line of origin and development of literature all over the world.

The earliest Tamil literature now extant consists of anthologies of short lyrics and of longer poems. It is usual to count the lyrical anthologies as eight known as *Ettu-t-togai* and it is also usual to count the longer poems as ten, collected under the name of *Pattu-p-pāttu*. These names occur in the ancient commentary on *Nannūl* (s.v. 387) of about the 14th century. Pērāsiriyar (c. 14th century) one of the

30-a V. S. Iyer's 5th edn. p. 6.

31 This may be either Pannatti (Skt. Prajnapti) or Päinna (Skt. Prakirṇa) of the Jaina Prakrit works.

commentators on Tolkāppiyam refers to these collections simply as Togai and Pāttu[32] respectively. The eight anthologies are :

1. Narrinai
2. Kurundogai
3. Ainguru-nūru
4. Padirru-p-pattu
5. Paripādal
6. Kalittogai
7. Ahanānūru and
8. Puranānūru

Of these the first three, the sixth and the seventh collections treat of love-themes technically known as '*aham*', in its several aspects. Such love-aspects, '*tinais*' have been classified into five sections, viz., *kurinji* or pre-marital love, *marudam* or post-martial love, *mullai* or the patient suffering of the wife during her lord's separation in eager expectancy of his return, *neidal* or the lamentations of the lovers in separation and *pālai* or the separation of lovers and the consequent anguish. The fourth and the eighth have for the subjects non-love themes, technically called '*puram*', which includes heroism in war, liberality, just rule, praises of gods and of men. The fifth in the series, *viz.*, Paripādal partakes of the nature of both, some songs in praise of gods, others in depiction of love.

The ten longer poems are :

1. Murugārruppadai
2. Porunar-ārruppadai
3. Siru-pān-ārruppadai
4. Perum-pān-ārruppadai
5. Mullai-p-pāttu
6. Maduraikkānji
7. Nedunalvādai
8. Kurinjippāttu
9. Pattinappālai and
10. Malaipadu-kadām

Of these the first four and the last poem belong to the class known as ārruppadai which is described below. The fifth, the seventh, the eighth and the ninth are essentially love-poems. The sixth is a benedictory poem.

The 5th and the 6th anthologies, Paripādal and Kalittogai consist of poems written at a later period and so also Murugārruppadai the first of the longer poems is a late pro-

---

32 Comm. Seyyuliyal, 50, 80.

duction. There are very strong grounds for this conclusion which will be set forth later. They have no sort of claim to be considered among the earliest literature of the Tamils. Though these anthologies and the longer poems were *compiled* at a later period, I have listed them all here simply for the purpose of facilitating references in the standard editions now available.

Another point also may be noted. These poems are generally called Sangam poems and the collections are called Sangam anthologies. We shall adopt this nomenclature. But there is a clear distinction between the Sangam poems and the Sangam anthologies. Chronologically the poems are much earlier and the anthologies could have been compiled only later. We must bear this distinction in mind and never lose sight of it. In the earliest period with which we are now dealing, we are concerned only with the Sangam *poems* and *not* with the anthologies.

Leaving out of account the poems of the two anthologies, the Murugārruppadai, the invocatory stanzas and the padigams in Padirruppattu which are all of a later date, the earliest literature, including fragments, consists of 2186 poems distributed over six anthologies and one collection of longer poems. They contain in all about 26,350 lines.

The total number of poets who composed these poems can only be approximately given. The tradition embodied in the commentary of Iraiyanār Ahapporul mentions the total as 449. But the Sanga Ilakkiyam (Samājam edition, 1940) counts as many as 473. Naturally this aggregate excludes the anonymous authors of the 88 poems (13 in Aham, 10 in Kurundogai, 56 in Narrinai, 5 in Paddirruppattu and 14 in Puranānūru) and includes the 35 poets who are named after some significant expression occurring in their poems. In the present state of our knowledge, even the Samājam total has to be taken as merely an approximation. Curiously enough, this number comes near the traditional number which might after all be correct. Most probably the scholar who recorded the tradition computed the total from the manuscripts of Sangam works available in his days. We have suspected that the Paripādal, the invocatory stanzas at the beginning of most of the Sangam collections, the Kalittogai and the

Murugārruppadai, do not belong to the early Sangam period. The last two works may be left out of account, since they are wrongly attributed to poets of the early Sangam. So if we omit from the Sangam numbering the 14 poets, 13 of the Paripādal and Perundēvanār of Bhāratam fame, the author of the invocatory stanzas, the total comes to 459.[32-a] This is still nearer the traditional number and lends weight to my views that the Paripādal etc. belong to a later date.

It has been noted above that 35 poets are named after some significant expressions used by them. For instance, a poet bears the name Kangul vellattār (lit. he of the night-flood) and the expression kangul-vellam is found in his poem. This device of naming poets occurs in Sanskrit anthologies also.[33]

32-a On a closer examination, I find now that the traditional number is correct.

33 Sloka 1255 of *Subhāshitāvali* is ascribed to a poet of the name 'Dagdhamarana' and this phrase occurs in the sloka itself. Other instances are 'Nidrādaridra' (sloka 1362), Karnikāramankha (sloka 1660) etc.

In studying the names of Sangam Poets the following from the Sacred Books of the Buddhists, Vol. II, pp. 193-196 may be noted.

There were 8 modes of naming in use in early times in India.

1. A nickname arising out of some personal peculiarity. Such are Lambakànna (Hanging-eared).
2. A personal names, called in Pali the Mula-nama. Such are Tissa, (after the lucky star of that name) Nanda or Ananda (Joy), Abhaya (Fearless).
3. The name of the Gotra or gens, what we should call a surname or family name. Kasyapa, Koundinya, Bharadvaja.
4. The name of the clan, called in Pali kula-nama, such as Licchavi, Malla, etc.
5. The name of the mother, with putra (son) added to it. Such as Sari-putta (the more usual name by which the famous disciple Upatissa is called).

N.B. The name of the father is never used in this way, and that the mother's name is never a personal name; but always taken either from the clan, or from the family, to which she belonged.

6. The name of the position in society, or the occupation, of the person addressed. Such are Brahmana, gahapati, etc.
7. A mere general term of courtesy or respect, not containing any special application to the person addressed — such as ayye.
8. Lastly there is the local name. Eg. Gaya-Kassapa.

P. V. Kane's History of Dharmasastra, Vol. II, Part I pp. 238-254 may be consulted with advantage. See also Nannul—276,

Pāri-magaḷir (Pari's daughters) are mentioned as the authors of stanza 112 of *Puram*. A parallel instance is found in sloka 2227 of Subhāshitāvali which is ascribed to Kavi-putrau (lit. the two sons of a poet.). There are also other common features worth studying.

Returning to our subject, it may be possible by a close and diligent study of the poems to place these 449 poets in their chronological order. There are internal evidences and also the names of kings and patrons on whom most of the *Puranānūru* poems and some of the other anthologies have been composed. Padirruppattu devotes itself entirely to Chēra Kings. All these may be of great help in constructing this chronology. An attempt has been made in this direction by Mr. K. N. Sivarāja Pillai formerly of the Madras University.

A fresh independent enquiry is necessary to settle this matter finally. Here a general idea of the Tamil language and its vocabulary at this period might be given. We have mentioned already the several contacts which threw open the Tamil countries to the cultural influences of the north in an ever-increasing measure. A detailed description of a yāga performance in Puram 166 and frequent references to Vedic gods in Puram (*e.g.* 16, 23), Padirruppattu (*e.g.* 11) and other early collections furnish evidence of the spread of the Vedic religion among the Tamils. Buddhists[34] were also propagating their religion in the

---

34 South India as a centre of Pāli Buddhism by B. C. Law (Dr. S. K. Aiyangar's Commemoration volume pp. 239-245) : Nāgārjuni Konda inscriptions prove that there was a mahavihāra for Buddhist recluses coming from different countries among which Damila is mentioned. These Buddhists were Thēravādins. Gandhavamsa says (J. P. T. S. 1886 pp. 66-67) that Kānchipura was one of the main centres of Pāli Buddhism of Thēravāda. Madurai also (Madhurasutta pattana) is mentioned as the place where Buddhaghōsa and Buddhamitta lived for sometime, before the former repaired to Kānchipura. Buddhaghōsa was a native of Tirunelvēli region. Uraga-pura (modern Uraiyur in the Tiruchināpalli District) was the birthplace of Buddhadatta, who lived in the village of Bhūtamangala near 'the flourishing inland port of Kavēri-pattana.' Buddhaghōsa and Buddhadatta were contemporaries

Tamil countries, among others, and tried to give a new lease of life to Buddhism in the South, where it was originally preached by the missionaries sent by Emperor Asoka. Some poets bear Buddhist names, *e.g.* Ilambōdhiyār, Thēradaran, Siru-ven-thēraiyār etc. Jainism supplied a new religious force which was for some centuries a powerful rival to Hinduism in the South. Jaina mythology is found in Puram 175 and in Aham 59. Thus the Tamil land became a fertile nursery and the several religions noted above throve in friendly rivalry.

The adherents of these several religions brought in their special vocabulary and enriched the Tamil language. New tributaries were added to its stream and it swelled in content. The orthodox Hindus of the age, mainly Brāhmins were responsible for words[35] relating to their gods, religion, religious rites, religious beliefs, religious books, ethics and to their daily habits and customs. In addition to these, several common words[36] relating to the ordinary social life of a people were also contributed by them. These two classes of words taken directly from Sanskrit flowed into the main cur-

---

and they flourished in the 5th century A.D. South India continued to be the centre of Pāli Buddhism as late as the 12th century A.D., a date to which Anuruddha (a Buddhist teacher of South India, according to the Talaing records) the celebrated author of the Abhidhammattha is assigned.

35 (*e.g.*) yūpam — puram 15, alliyam (Hallisa) — puram 33; avi (havis) — puram 377; āvuti (āhuti) — puram 99; vacciram (vajrāyudha) — puram 241; Kandam (skandha) — puram 52; Kanda (skandha) — puram 57, 93; Kauriyar (Kauravar) — puram 3; darumam (dharma) — puram 353; Tuvarai (Dvaraka) — puram 201; tūn (Sthūna) — puram 86; amarar — puram 99; vēdam — puram 6; pindam — puram 234; māyōn (māya) — puram 57; muttī (lit. three fires) — puram 2; munivar — puram 6, 43; bali — aham 166; deivam — aham 166; tittiyam (chitya) — aham 361; tulāi (tulasi) — padirru. 31; pūdam (bhūta) — puram 369; Catai (jatā) — puram 1; karakam — puram 1; tavam (tapas) — puram 1.

36 (*e.g.*) nīr — puram 1; Kalam (khala), padam (pada), tumbai (tumba), imayam — puram 2; nēmi, mukam — puram 3; Kān (kānana) — puram 5; kumari, ulakam — puram 6; cāpam (cāpa), mā, valavan (vallabha) — puram 7; pōkam (bhoga); mandilam (mandala) — puram 8; Dandam (danda), amiltu (amirta), mallar (malla), silai (silā) — puram 10; mayil (mayura) — puram 116; pātini (pātinini) — puram 11.

rent of the language and enriched its contents. Next to Brāhmins, the Jains seem to have contributed most to our language. Their words also fall into the classes mentioned above, but with a notable difference. The words all of Prakrit forms were mostly in current colloquial [illegible][37]

The religious terms of the Jains did not pass into the main current, though they were used in late specialistic works such as Jīvakachintāmani, Sūlāmani, etc. The Buddhists also contributed to our language and their words were mainly of Pāli origin. It might be that several of these were of Prākrit descent also.[38]

---

37 (*e.g.*) vannam, uru (rupa), Kanan (gana), ēmam (Kshēma) — puram 1; vali (bala), pāl (payas), andi (sandhi) — puram 2; murasam (muraja), nēem (snēha), sāndu (candana), ilakkam (lakshya) — puram 3; naman (saman), tēem (desa), nagar (nagara) — puram 6; iravu (rātri), mīn (mīna), payam (prayōjana) — puram 3; ūkkam (utsāha), tānai (sēna), malai (malaya) — puram 8; pārppanar (brāhmana), aran (charana) — puram 9; pāci (prāci), ūci (udīci) — puram 229.

38 (*e.g.*) attam (addha=road) — kurun 307; ahil (agalu=aloe wood) — kurun 339; ānai (ānā=order) — maduraik. 761; annai (annā=mother) — kurun 93; pandam (bhāndam=article, goods) — puram 102; cāti (cāti=jar) — perumpān 280; tōni (dōni=trough-shaped canoe with an outrigger to steady it) — puram 229; sūtu (jūto=gambling); kamuhu (kamuko=areca palm) — perum-pān 7; kannan (kanho=krishna); kanji (kanjikam=a sour rice-gruel); kaitai (kētaki=the tree *Pandanus Odorattissimus*) — kurun 304; kūtam (kūto=a sledge-hammer) — perumpān 438; pōtu (potu=ordinary, common) — puram 8; manaivi (manavi=woman) — puram 250; nānjil (nāngalam=plough) — puram 19; niyamam nigame=a market town) — madurai-k 365; ōram (ōrō=below, posterior, on this side); pakkam (pakkho=a wing, side etc.) — kurun. 129; uvamam (opamam=simile, comparison) — maduraik. 516; panniyam (panyam=ware, commodity) — maduraik. 506; palingu (phaliko=crystal, quartz) — kurinci 57; pāhal (phāggavo=a sort of pot-herb) — puram 16; panju (picu=cotton) — puram 116; pillai (pillako=child) — puram 380; pulu (pulavo=worm, maggot); sānam, sānai (sano=a grind-stone); seliyan (seliyo=a man of self-discipline) — puram 19; seyya (seyyo=better, excellent); tagaram (tagaram=the shrub *tabernae montana coronaria* and a fragrant powder obtained from it) — puram 132; kurinci 108; tāl (tālo=key) — nedunal 63; tālam (thālam=metal bowl, plate) — puram 120; tūmbu (timbo=a sort of water-vessel

Judging from the vocabulary contributed by these several religionists, we might conclude that Brāminism powerfully held the imagination of the people and was predominent in every walk of life. Next to this came Jainism and not far behind. The leaders of this religion mixed freely with the people, studied their language and became adepts in it. They laid great emphasis on moral principles, persuaded the people to become converts to their religion and were accommodative enough in several respects. The Buddhists led, in later times, perhaps a secluded life in caves and did not move freely with the people. Hence their religion never had any great influence in the Tamilian country. Probably this accounts for their comparative insignificance in South India.

Against this background lay scattered the several poetic pieces of the earliest times. They were secular, a good part of them praising kings and chieftains and subtly introducing religious elements to attract and influence the nobility of the land; and the rest, dealing with love in all its aspects, to appeal to the literate among the masses.

We shall now try to settle roughly the period when these poems were composed and when their authors lived. For this purpose, we shall consider the longer poems included in the Pattuppāttu and also the two anthologies of: Padirruppattu and Ainguru-nrru. These two collections will receive our attention only on their chronological side.

Of the longer poems, the first is *Murugārru-p-padai,* consisting of 317 lines. Its author is a certain Nakkīrar. It serves perhaps as an invocatory poem for the collection. The second is *Porunarārru-p-padai* consisting of 248 lines. Its author is Mudattāmakkanniyar and the hero of the poem is Karikār-peru-valattān. The third is *Sirupānārruppadai* containing 269 lines. Its author is Nallūr Nattattanār and its hero is Nalliyiakkōdan. This poem refers to the seven

---

with a spout) — puram 19; tūnam (thūna=pillar, column) — perumpān 316; tunnam (tunnam=suture, patch) — puram 136; valangu (valasiga=valanjetito use, resort to spend) — puram 252; varaku (varako=the bean *Phaseolus tribolus*) — puram 34.

— *Childrers: Pali Dictionary*

Vallals (patrons of learning) of the Sangam Age. The fourth poem is *Perumpānārruppadai* containing 500 lines. Its author is Kadiyalūr-urattiran-kannanār and its hero is Tondaimān-Ilandiraiyan. The fifth in the collection is *Mullai-p-pāttu* consisting of 103 lines. This is the shortest of the long poems. The author is Nappūdanār and he refers to mlechchhas (Yavanas) in lines 60-66. The sixth poem is Madurai-k-kanji containing 782 lines. This is the longest poem of the series. The author is Māngudimarudanār and the hero of the poem is Talaiyālankānattu-cheruvenra-Nedunjeliyan. Nannan is mentioned in lines 618 to 619 and Ōnam festival in l. 591. The seventh in this collection is *Nedunalvādai* consisting of 188 lines. Its author is Nakkīrar. The hero of the poem is the above-mentioned Nedunjeliyan himself. This poem also refers to mlechchhas (31 to 35). The eighth of the series is *Kurinji-p-pāttu.* It consists of 261 lines and its author is Kapilar. The colophon says that this poem was written to show the excellence of Tamil and Tamilian courtship to an Āryan king Pirahattan (Brahasta) by name. It may also be noted that the poet Kapilar is referred to by Nakkīrar in *Aham* 78 and 141. The ninth poem is *Pattina-p-pālai.* This consists of 301 lines. Its author is Kadiyalūr Uruttirankannanār and its hero is Karikār-peruvalattān. It is referred to in Kalingattu-p-parani (21) and also in an inscription of Tiruvellarai.[39] The tenth and last poem is *Malaipadukadām* consisting of 583 lines. Its author is Perunkausikanār of Perungunrūr in Iraniya-muttam. The hero of the poem is Nannan, son of Nannan.

Most of these poems belong to the class of composition known as 'ārrupadai'. A bard who has visited a patron and received bounty at his hands, returns home and on his way, he meets with another bard with his retinue, in a very poverty-stricken condition. He directs the latter to the patron, detailing the way which would lead to the patron's residence and narrating graphically the reception which he would get. Tolkāppiyar specifically mentions the varieties of this kind of poem. He gives no place to a poem like *Murugārruppadai* in which a bhakta (devotee) is directed to go to the several shrines of his chosen deity.

---

[39] Sen Tamil, vol. 41, p. 214-216.

From these details certain facts emerge. *Porunar-ārrup-padai* and *Pattinappālai* are sung in honour of Karikār-peru-valattān and the author of Pattina-p-pālai is also the author of Perumpān-ārru-p-padai. Hence these three works must have been composed at about the same time. *Madurai-k-kānji* and *Nedunalvādai* have been composed in praise of Nedunjeliyan of Talaiyālangānam fame. Hence these two works may be considered to have been composed by contemporary poets. The hero of the poem Malaipadukadām, Nannan's son Nannan, is referred to in *Madurai-k-kānji* (line 618-619). So this work also must be considered as slightly earlier than the above two works. Kapilar, the author of *Kurinji-p-pāttu* is, as we have seen, referred to by Nakkīrar in Aham 78 and so Kurinji-p-pāttu must have been composed earlier than *Nedunalvādai* and Madurai-k-kānji. There is no clue throwing any light on the relative date of *Mullai-p-pāttu.* Possibly, this poem is very close to *Nedunalvādai* in date, as both these works refer to the *mlechchhas.* The few parallel passages in these two works confirm this view. Sirupān-ārruppadai, as has already been mentioned, refers to all the seven Vallals in the past tense. These patrons of arts and letters have been praised by Paranar, Kapillar, Mudamōsiyār, Avvaiyār and others. We may take it that this poem *Sirupānārruppadai* was composed subsequent to the period when these poets flourished. It was most probably the last in the series of Pattupāttu poems, *Murugārruppadai* excepted. The following order covers the facts noted above :

I	1. *Porunar-ārrup-padai*	Mudattāmakkanniyār
	2. *Perumpān-ārrup-padai*	Uruttirankannanār
	3. *Pattinap-pālai*	- do -
	4. *Kurinji-p-pāttu*	Kapilar
II	5. *Malaipadukadām*	Perunkunrur-Perunkausikanār
	6. *Madurai-k-kānji*	Māngudi-marudanār
	7. *Nedunalvādai*	Nakkīrar
	8. *Mullai-p-pāttu*	Nappūtanār
III	9. *Sirupān-ārrup-padai*	Nallūr Nattattanār
IV	10. *Murug-ārrup-padai*	Nakkīrar (later)

In these groups, Nakkīrar, the author of *Nedunalvādai*, falls in the second. He refers in *Aham* 141 to Karikāl-valavan the hero of *Perumpān-ārrup-padai* of the first group. There is no evidence to show that these two were contemporaries. Hence Nakkīrar lived later than Karikāl-valavan. It also follows that Nedunjeliyan, the hero of Nakkīrar's poem *Nedunalvādai* was later than Karikāl-valavan. This is confirmed by the fact that none of the poets who have praised Karikāla have composed any poem on Nedunjeliyan.

The author of *Murugārru-p-padai* though he bears the name of Nakkīrar, was different from his namesake of the Sangam and lived far later than any of the poets so far mentioned. His date and other particulars is discussed by me elsewhere (See Ilakkiya Deepam, pp. 13-43).

The earlier Nakkīrar, the author of *Nedunalvādai* has given us some valuable clues as regards the probable date of his compositions. He refers to *rāsis* (Zodiacal constellations), and also distinctly says that the Sun beginning from Mēsha (Aries) travels through the successive *rāsis*, i.e. through each successive sign of the zodiac. The passage occurs in Nedunalvādai, (lines 160 to 162). A contemporary poet Kūdalūr-kilār mentions, in *Puram* 229, *mēsha rāsi* with several other details, such as the fact that the nakshatra *Purvaphālguni* was on a particular day declining from the zenith at midnight. From the history of Hindu astronomy we might gather that the *rāsis* came into practical use only about 300 A.D. Mr. L. D. Swamikannu Pillai has examined the whole question in his *Indian Ephemeris* [40] and come to the conclusion that the 'early Indian literature (Sanskrit or Dravidian) before A.D. 300 does not refer to the signs of the Zodiac, to the movements of the planet or to planetary horoscopes, which are, as it were, the tripod of Astrology'. But on such questions the dating can only be approximate. Nakkīrar and his contemporaries (poets and kings) may be assigned to about 250 A.D. This is confirmed by several facts emerging from

40 Vol. I. part I. p. 496.

a study of contemporary poems. Nakkīrar himself, in the same *Nedunalvādai* gives details of an auspicious hour for laying the foundation of a pallace, describing a sort of sundial. Architectural details, such as *garbha-griha* are also mentioned by him. Two contemporary poets, Nappūdanār and Nallanduvanār of Sangam period (to be distinguished from Āsiriyar Nallanduvanār of *Paripādal* and *Kalittogai*), make reference to water-clock under the name 'kannal',[41] which was probably a Roman import. Kannal, whose origin and derivation can hardly be made out now is perhaps connected with the Greek Khronos. So we may take it that the last of the Sangam poets *i.e.*, the poets of Nakkīrar epoch flourished about the end of the third century A.D.[42]

Now, Māngudi-marudan refers in his Madurai-k-kanji to Vadimbalambaninra-Pāndya (lines 60-61) and Palyāga-sālai-mudukudumi-p-Peruvaludi (l. 759) as two of the remote ancestors of Nedunjeliyan, the victor of Talaiyālangānam. Vadimbalamba-minra-Pāndyan is somewhat of a hazy figure and to him is attributed the first festival for the Sea-god and the digging of the Pahruliyāru. But Mudukudumi is a historical personage and he is praised in as many as 5 stanzas in Puram. He is also mentioned in the Vēlvikkudi grant.[43] A few generations may have elapsed between his time and that of Nedunjeliyan and it is within reason to count the number as five or six. This leads us to the conclusion that the earliest of the Pāndyas known to us definitely lived about the second century A.D. and that will also be the time when the earliest poets who have sung about this Pāndya lived. The Vēlvikudi grant also supports this conclusion by mentioning that Mudukudumi's grant was long enjoyed before the Kalabhras came (nīdubuktituiyttapin). After the Kalabhra interregnum, Kadungōn of the Pāndya line succeeds to the kingdom. Kadungōn's rule began about

---

41 *Mullaip-pattu* line 57, *Aham* 43.

42 A Gangan Katti is mentioned in Aham, 44. He was not one of the Gangas of Mysore and so the date given here is not affected.

43 E. I; XVII; Peruntogai, 889.

600 A.D. Allowing 500 years for the long interval and the Kalabhra interregnum, we reach the beginning of the 2nd century A.D. when Mudukudumi may have flourished.

We shall take Padirru-p-pattu next. This consists of ten sections and we have lost the first and the last sections of this work. It deals with the Chēra dynasty. The first section was probably about Perunjōrru-Udiyan-Cēral and the last section, about Yānaikkatchey Māndaran-Cēral-Irumporai, the Elephant-eyed Chēra. A detailed study of the work yields us two genealogies. The first genealogy give us three generations of one Royal house and the second also covers three generations of another.

Senguttuvan, the hero of the fifth decade is the most famous of these Chēras. He was a contemporary of Gajabāhu I of Ceylon (see ante) and he ascended the throne probably about 200 A.D. We may count back at least two generations from him. This also gives us the first half of the second century A.D. as the date when the first tangible figure of a Chēra king emerges into history.

The poets who composed the sections of Padirruppattu are Kumattūr-kannanār, Pālai-kautamanār, Kāppiyārru-kāppiyanār, Paranar, Kākkaipādiniyār-Nacchellaiyār, Kapilar, Arisil-kilār and Perungunrūr Kilār. Among these we find Paranar, and Kapilar. The former was the contemporary of Senguttuvan and the latter, the contemporary of Selvak-kadungō-vāli-Ādan, who lived sometime later. Probably these poets lived between 150 and 250 A.D.

Ain-guru-nūru, was compiled by Pulatturai murriya-kūdalūr-kilār under the royal patronage of the elephant-eyed Chēra mentioned above. This Chēra was taken in captivity by the Pāndya king Nedunjeliyan of Talaiyālangānam fame, and his death is bemoaned by the above poet in *Puram* 229. So the poets who composed the five centums of Ain-gurunūru must have all lived round about 275 A.D. The

poets are Ōram-bōgiar, Ammūvanār, Kapilar Ōdal-Āndaiyār and Pēyanār. Kapilar being one of them, these poets might be placed between A.D. 200-275.

Thus we are led to conclude that the poets of the early Sangam literature flourished from the second century A.D. to the end of the third century A.D. and that this was the genuine Sangam period.

A word about the Sangam poems. They are all in *ahaval* metre, the first in the long course of development of the Tamil metrical system. It is indigenous and has no parallel in Sanskrit, the blank verse in English being its nearest equivalent. The magnificent sweep of the longer poems in *Pattup-pāttu* is sometimes marred by obscurity of construction. In fact, the commentator, a scholiast of a very high order, often takes to devious ways in his explanation of several passages. But in shorter poems, the language is direct and forceful. Conciseness of expression, pregnancy of meaning, purity of diction and unity of thought are the main characteristics of these Sangam poems and the simplicity of the Tamilian taste compares very favourably with that of the ancient Greeks. The frigid conceits, and the pedantic professional exercises of grammarians which characterise the literature of a later period are entirely absent. On the other hand, simple humanity is mirrored in these crystal-clear utterances. Where emotions are stirred, they are severely restrained and the subdued expression which they give rise to are the most effective in literature. There is art, severe and simple; but of artificiality there is very little trace.

Claims are sometimes made that the *Aham* poems, that is, poems of love, are the sole monopoly of the ancient Tamils. Sanskrit literature abounds in poems of this nature and indeed some of these poems are very ancient. I may refer to the famous *Hālā Sattasai.* It is a collection of 700 *gāthās* in the *Āryā* metre in *Mahārāshtri Prākrit* and it is ascribed to King Hālā. The situations portrayed in these *gāthās* are

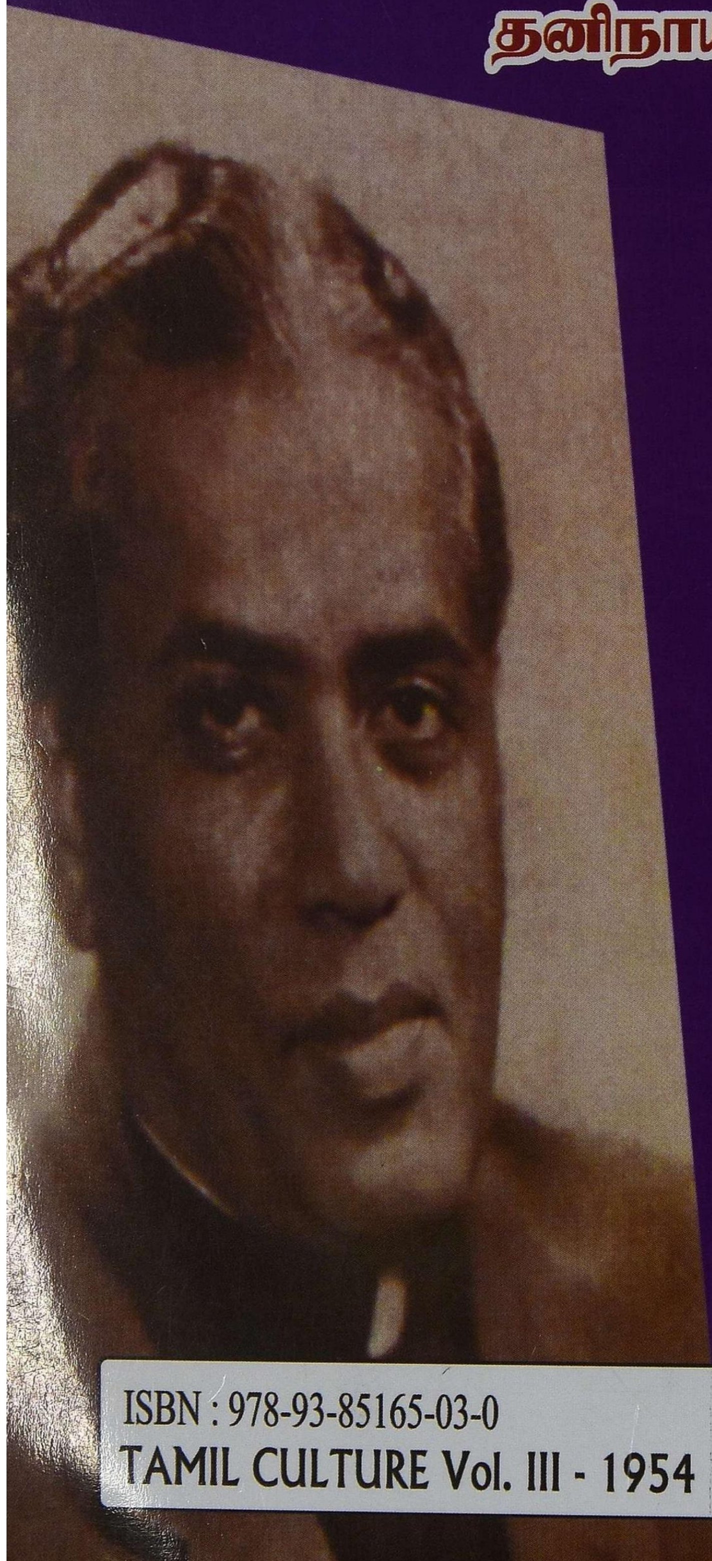
very much like the Tamil *turai* given in the colophons. But love-poems are not confined to any one clime or country. It is said that during the time of Justinian, 'epigramatic' writing especially in its amatory department experienced a great revival at the hands of Agathias, the historican Paulus Silentiarius and their circle and their ingenious, but mannered productions were collected by Agathias into a new anthology.' The poems in our collections also do not escape the charge of being mannered productions. But the ancient Tamil poets can take credit for some of the loveliest utterences on erotic themes.

The value of these ancient poems, especially of the *Purananūru* and the *Padirrup-pattu* can hardly be exaggerated. They portray the life of the times. They give us glimpses of political and social conditions. They describe with exactitude, the religion, manners, customs, beliefs and superstitions of the time. They disclose a vivid picture of the esteem in which learning, literature and art were held by our ancients. They teach us a noble philosophy of life and conduct. They whisper to us sweetly and intimately about the domestic felicity of the ancient times. In short, they constitute a storehouse of facts bearing on ancient manners, customs and ideas and they are the influences which have contributed largely to mould the character and the literature of the later Tamils. Today they serve as beacon lights to guide modern poesy in the Tamil land. Above all, there is genuine poetry of a very high order which, in spite of the inevitable changes in our outlook and in our life, thrills our very being and makes us look back with pride and joy at the poetic achievements of the ancient Tamils.

TAMIL CULTURE

Vol. III - 1954

தனிநாயகம் அடிகளார்



ISBN : 978-93-85165-03-0
TAMIL CULTURE Vol. III - 1954